

CROMWELL DICTATING TO HIS SECRETARY MILTON.—P. 230

OLIVER CROMWELL

AND

THE PROTECTORATE.

BY DANIEL WILSON, F.S.A. SCOT.



NASEBY FIGHT.—P. 102.

THOMAS NELSON, LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

MDCCCXLVIII

Bayne, Alexander No. 20

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Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
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But for thy trespasses."

Wordsworth.

LONDON:
THOMAS NELSON, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND EDINBURGH.

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LIST OF PLATES.



PREFACE.

The period appears to have arrived when the principles of their first Revolution are to become generally understood by Englishmen, and when the characters of those great men who were the leaders of the people during that struggle for our rights, shall be drawn anew, with a juster appreciation of them than heretofore;—it has arrived, or is arriving. That such justice, however, is still no unchallenged fact, becomes sufficiently apparent, when we remember that a royal commission, composed of men most eminent for station, rank, or literary fame, and nominated for the fit adornment of her Majesty's Palace of Westminster, (as the New Houses of Parliament are styled,) still sits, and—weighing the claims of the noble dead,—has conceded to Hampden a niche among England's patriots, but has refused to Cromwell *his* place among her kings.

Cromwell can well afford to wait for the revision of that sentence, as of all others. His virtues are mostly so far above those of the great majority of England's hereditary kings, that the injustice, which excludes the greatest of all her rulers from that vacant niche between the two Charles Stuarts, is a wrong done far more to us than to him. The present century has witnessed several attempts to do justice to the memory of Cromwell. Dr. Vaughan's Essay on the Character of Cromwell and his Times, was published in 1838. It is an impartial, and, upon the whole, a just, though guarded estimate of Cromwell's character. It failed to produce any extensive change in the general appreciation of Cromwell, mainly because its appearance in the form of an essay, rendered it more an expression of opinion than an argument, and so left its effect—depending as it did on the value previously attached to its author's views,—to be developed chiefly

among the class of thoughtful nonconformists, whose bias was already strongly in favour of the *Puritan King*. It helped, however, to lessen the influence of that able analysis of Cromwell's character, that the author permitted his anxiety to preserve the strict limits of candour and truth, to betray him into some timidity and inconsistency in forming his estimate of Cromwell. He acknowledges his religion to have been genuine, his emotions healthy and pure, and his ideas of toleration beyond those of the most enlightened Puritans of his age. Yet he admits the charge of dissimulation to be just. "Cromwell," says he, "dissembled in the fashion to be expected from him, viewed in the circumstances of his origin and history. The great difference between him, in this respect, and the martyr-king against whom he drew his sword, was, not that he felt less scruple than his illustrious opponent in yielding to this truly odious tendency, but that it sometimes betrayed itself, in his case, in a manner which is as much at variance with our taste as with our ideas of rectitude; and, unhappily, the majority of polite people inform us, in a thousand ways, that they are less disturbed by an offence against morals, than by an offence against refinement—so much so as to make it almost appear, that, in their esteem, a man is scarcely to be deemed a sinner at all, so long as he is careful to sin with the air of a courtier!"

The same year in which Dr. Vaughan's "Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell" appeared, Forster published, as one of his admirable series of "Lives of Eminent British Statesmen," a life of Cromwell. It is characterised by his wonted laborious research, and his no less attractive style of biographical narrative. But he was already pledged to "the statesmen of the Commonwealth," and seems to have found it impossible to reconcile his admiration of the great men of the Long Parliament, with any commendation of the policy of the Protectorate. As by far the most candid and impartial of Cromwell's biographers, who have adhered to what may be styled *the hypocritical theory* of Cromwell's character, I have quoted largely from him, in maintaining an opposite view. As a writer who is as far as possible removed from the prejudices of Cromwell's royalist defamers, Forster's opinions well merit our careful study, and have carried the more weight with them that they are not put forward as mere opinions, but in the form of conclusions deduced from the evidence he produces. The reader having now the opportunity of comparing them with others, must judge for himself.

By far the most valuable contribution, however, to the biography of Cromwell, and the history of his government, is beyond all question, his "Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations; by Thomas Carlyle." It forms a new era in the history of the man and his times. Men, in general, cannot go in search of the evidence: even more diligent students, earnestly desirous of forming a just estimate of Cromwell, have not always the unwieldy treasures of the British Museum at their disposal, nor the time to avail themselves of them, if they had. They are compelled to turn to Clarendon, or Hallam, or Vaughan, or Forster; and accept of arguments and opinions often in lieu of evidence. Carlyle, however, places us on altogether higher ground. His evidence is now before us, arranged and sifted, in chronological order, and with clear references to the circumstances under which each fact transpired. If the reader like not his "elucidations," he is welcome to *elucidate* them better for himself, if he can. Already this work produces fruits. A foreign divine, in high esteem for piety and literary attainments, stimulated to the task by a grateful sense of benefits conferred on his Huguenot fathers by the Protector of the English Commonwealth, has stepped into the arena, and become the vindicator of Cromwell; with what success it would be out of place here to judge. Others, no doubt, will appeal to the jury of the English nation, now that the evidence is before them; and it is only as such an unpretending popular appeal, that this little sketch is offered. As one volume of a series, I have been bound down as to space, and limited in its production as to time. The reader is not therefore to expect from it what it makes no pretensions to. Where it has seemed necessary, points have been occasionally illustrated by reference to early authorities, and to sources beyond the reach of the general reader; but original research into the vast fields of contemporary controversy and pamphleteering has not been attempted, nor is it now greatly needed, in order to form a just estimate of Cromwell. It is not from want of evidence that he has been misjudged hitherto, but rather, because the evidence has been from the first so overlaid with extraneous prejudices and opinions, that it has required far more labour and ingenuity than ordinary readers are in the habit of exercising, to separate the one from the other. Above all, rejection of false evidence has been far more needed than the accumulation of any additional and trustworthy materials. In coming to a new trial of the question, it has been necessary, not only to receive all prejudiced

evidence with caution, but, as a preliminary step, to dismiss altogether certain witnesses from the court, as convicted perjurers, whose evidence has heretofore been considered the most valuable and trustworthy. Even by such convictions, a great point is gained. When all false evidence has been got rid of, the admirers of Cromwell will have little to fear. The more he is known, the greater will be the admiration with which his character will be viewed by all thinking men. To be the leader of a great popular movement, he had probably as little of the vulgar attributes of a popular hero as any man that ever lived. Names, and forms, and shadows of things were altogether intolerable to him. He drove right on to the heart of the matter. Good government was with him the supremacy of order, not the mere realization of the popular will. Toleration was, with him, genuine liberty of conscience to every man who was not prepared to make his religion a cloak for anarchy and treason. Dissimulation!—I do think, after a careful study of his character, that of dissimulation, in its bad sense, Cromwell was incapable. He was a man scarcely ever equalled in decision and self-reliance, and therefore he kept his own counsel without an effort. But in his dealings with the King, with the Scottish Presbyterians, with his own parliaments, and with foreign courts, there is such a dogged straightforwardness; and in his very breaches of constitutional forms, such a steadiness of purpose in going by the very shortest way to the end he aimed at, that I cannot but think it will yet become matter of astonishment that such a charge should ever have been entertained. But the reader has now the argument before him, and the evidence at his command. Truth, not victory, is the aim of the historian, and truth is the daughter of time.

D. W.

EDINBURGH, 18th APRIL, 1848.

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AND

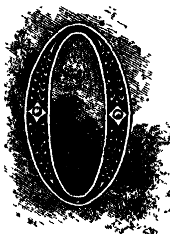
THE PROTECTORATE.

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WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.



N the 5th of April, 1603, James VI. of Scotland,—the Stuart heir to the crown of England, vacant by the death of the great Elizabeth,—after tearful partings with his subjects in the old Church of St. Giles at Edinburgh, and elsewhere, at length set out in unwonted pomp, to take possession of the long-coveted crown. Whatever were the mournings and forebodings of the Scots at so unwonted an alliance with their old southern foe, the Scottish King was elated beyond measure by his fortune, and by the profuse hospitality and largess with which his new subjects

welcomed him, in his progress towards the English capital. Knights and nobles vied with one another in loyal invitations to the King, and impoverished their revenues in feats of hospitality and magnificent display.

Foremost amongst these duteous entertainers of the Stuart was the knightly owner of Hinchinbrook; a fine old English manor-house in Huntingdonshire, constructed on the site, and partly from the remains, of an ancient convent, suppressed in Henry VIII.'s time by the King's Vicar General and Earl of Essex, the celebrated Thomas Cromwell. Sir Oliver Cromwell, the Knight of Hinchinbrook, and entertainer of King James, in April 1603, and on various later occasions, was a descendant of the old prime minister of Henry VIII., and had an honest ambition, such as it was. The vain old cavalier must needs surpass all others in the magnificence of his entertainment of the new King, and had his reward. As the King passed through the great court of Hinchinbrook on taking his departure, he said to his host, in his broad Scottish dialect, "Marry, man, thou hast treated me better than any one since I left Edinburgh!" Young Oliver Cromwell, a nephew of the hospitable Knight of Hinchinbrook,—and destined to play the entertainer to Stuart kings in a very different fashion,—was, at the period of James's visit to his uncle, about four years old.

Sir Henry Cromwell, knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1563,—popularly styled the Golden Knight, for many generous and kindly actions to the poor in the neighbourhood of his estates,—left to his eldest son, Oliver, the inheritance of a noble fortune, which he contrived to squander in his extravagant ambition to be the chief entertainer of royalty. Sir Henry Cromwell died in January 1603, leaving behind him six sons and five daughters, to more than one of whom some interest still attaches. Of his daughters, Elizabeth was married to William Hampden, of Great Hampden, Bucks, and became the mother of the

patriot Hampden. Of his sons, Robert Cromwell, the younger brother of Sir Oliver, settled on a small estate at Huntingdon, worth about £1,000 a-year, according to the value of money now; and there, in the year 1591, he brought home as his wife Elizabeth Steward, a young widow of honourable descent. Genealogists have proved her beyond doubt to have been the lineal descendant of the third son of Alexander, Lord High Steward of Scotland, from whose eldest son sprang the Stuart line of kings, and the hapless Queen, Mary Stuart, while his second son gave birth to the noble family of Lennox, from whom descended Queen Mary's husband, Lord Darnley, the ill-fated father of her son and supplanter, James VI.

On the 25th of April, 1599, Oliver, the fifth child of Robert Cromwell, Esquire, and Elizabeth Steward, was born at Huntingdon, in the large old Gothic mansion which remained there till early in the present century, seemingly one of the most considerable mansions in the burgh. The royalist biographers of Cromwell have delighted in recording that his father was a brewer at Huntingdon, and that his widowed mother carried on the same homely manufacture, when left alone to contend with the world, for the maintenance of her young family. Thinking men, however, whatever be their opinions otherwise, are ceasing to trouble themselves greatly with genealogical investigations as to the descent of men of genius. Though it should be proved that Shakespear was the son of a wool-comber or a butcher of Stratford, it cannot greatly affect our admiration of his genius, or our delight in his matchless writings; and as little could the honest industry of the brewer of Huntingdon and his faithful widow, disparage the fame of the Protector of England. The brewery at Huntingdon appears, like the wool-combery at Stratford, to have been, after all, only a part of the owner's economy in the farming of his estate,

and as little discreditable, even according to the conventional standard of aristocratic nicety, as the agricultural schemes of modern landowners, in which the proudest of England's peers have taken the lead. His revenue derived therefrom,—equal to about £1,000 in our own day,—was no unseemly income for the younger son of a knight who had frequently entertained the King as his guest, and whose father before him had done like honours to Queen Elizabeth. "Oliver Cromwell," says Milton, "was sprung from a noble and illustrious family. The name was famous of old in the state, when kings governed it well; more famous still for a purer faith than either first established or restored among us."

Cromwell had in every way reason to be proud of his forefathers, had he cared to glance back from the prouder pre-eminence he won for himself, to the ennobled ancestry of his father, or the royal blood that flowed to him through his mother's veins. His biographer, Noble, with laborious minuteness, traces out the ramifications of the genealogical tree, and shows more than one augmentation to the old family shield borne by Cromwell, in right of royal recognition of signal acts of valour or merit in his ancestors. Of his own parents, all that we know tends to show them as among the best of their class of plain old English gentry. Robert Cromwell, a grave, strict, even somewhat stern father, with mind imbued with those earnest views of religion as a principle of Divine origin and of infinite importance in time and eternity, which had remained as some of the best fruits of the Reformation in many such quiet scenes of domestic retirement. Elizabeth, the daughter of William Steward of Ely, his mother, is better known to us. She shared in the honours and the fortunes of her son,—as noble a woman as ever ranked among the mothers of England. "An interesting person, indeed," says Forster,* "was this mother of Oliver

* Life of Cromwell. Cabinet Cyclopædia, vol. lxxxi. p. 8.

Cromwell—a woman with the glorious faculty of self-help when other assistance failed her. Ready for the demands of fortune in its extremest adverse time—of spirit and energy equal to her mildness and patience—who, with the labour of her own hands, gave dowries to five daughters sufficient to marry them into families as honourable, but more wealthy than their own—whose single pride was honesty, and whose passion love—who preserved in the gorgeous palace at Whitehall the simple tastes that distinguished her in the old brewery at Huntingdon—whose only care, amidst all her splendours, was for the safety of her beloved son in his dangerous eminence—finally, whose closing wish, when that anxious care had outworn her strength, accorded with her whole modest and tender history, for it implored a simple burial in some country church-yard, rather than those ill-suited trappings of state and ceremony wherewith she feared, and with reason feared, that his highness, the Lord Protector of England, would have her carried to some royal tomb! There is a portrait of her at Hinchinbrook, which, if that were possible, would increase the interest she inspires, and the respect she claims. The mouth, so small and sweet, yet full and firm as the mouth of a hero—the large melancholy eyes,—the light pretty hair—the expression of quiet affectionateness suffused over the face, which is so modestly enveloped in a white satin hood—the simple beauty of the velvet cardinal she wears, and the richness of the small jewel that clasps it—seem to present before the gazer her living and breathing character."

Such was she who watched over Oliver Cromwell with all the yearnings of a mother's love, from the hour when she first cradled him, an infant, on her breast, to that parting scene at Whitehall, when she called the Protector of England to her bedside, and, stretching forth her feeble hand, blessed him, ere with devout serenity she

wished him her last good night, exclaiming, "Dear son, I leave my heart with thee."

Of the events that have been recorded of the early years of Cromwell comparatively few are worthy of credit in the form they assume at the hands of his royalist defamers; yet even from such prejudiced detractors somewhat may be gleaned not altogether unworthy of notice. Four days after his birth, Oliver was baptized in the parish church of St. John's at Huntingdon;—his uncle, afterwards Sir Oliver Cromwell of Hinchinbrook, whose name he received standing as sponsor for him at the font. The noble old mansion of Hinchinbrook stood at no great distance, and thither young Oliver repaired frequently from his earliest years. When but an infant in the nurse's arms,—so tradition narrates,—his grandfather, Sir Henry Cromwell, sent for him to Hinchinbrook. The babe lay slumbering in some quiet corner of the old mansion, when a monkey, attracted by the unwonted object, snatched young Oliver from his cradle and made off with him to the leads of the house. The family ran with feather beds and blankets, expecting to see the monkey drop his charge from its perilous elevation, but, says the narrator, "The sagacious animal brought the fortune of England down in safety: so narrow an escape had he, who was doomed to be the conqueror and sovereign magistrate of three mighty nations, from the paws of a monkey."

Oliver was not quite four years old, when the good Knight of Hinchinbrook died, and with curious wonder and awe, as we may believe, the thoughtful child witnessed the pomp of heraldry with which his kind old grandfather was committed to the dust. Little Oliver was only a few months older when a far more magnificent and lively pageant, already referred to, attracted his notice, and doubtless formed one of the earliest scenes that left an enduring impression on his mind. "Oliver," says one

of his latest biographers, * "was four years old, when the shouts of a magnificent hunting party re-echoed along the banks of the Ouse. On the afternoon of Wednesday the 23d of April, 1603, a royal train—hounds, horses, and cavaliers—approached the green lawns and winding avenues of elder and willow trees that led to the manor-house. King James, son of the unhappy Mary Stuart, was coming from the north to take possession of the English crown. Elizabeth, the last of the Tudors, after raising England to the first place among the nations, had been dead little more than a month, having with her latest breath named her cousin of Scotland as her successor. On his way to London the King was to lodge at Hinchinbrook, the stately mansion of Oliver's uncle, where preparations were made to receive him in the most sumptuous manner. James came hunting all the way: and he appeared at last, possessing none of his mother's graces. He was of middle stature, and wore a thickly wadded dagger-proof doublet. He alighted in the court-yard, but his legs were too weak to carry his body, and he needed support to enable him to walk. He was almost seven years of age before he began to run alone. He took his seat at the table of the Knight: he drank with difficulty, and it seemed as if he masticated what he drank. On the other hand, he made a great show of learning, and his conversation was full of theological apophthegms and political maxims, which he delivered in the most pedantic fashion.

This royal visit to Hinchinbrook House must have been a great treat for little Oliver. The King arrived on Wednesday, and set off again on Friday; Sir Oliver giving him costly presents at his departure. Knights were created in the great hall, and among the number was the Protector's paternal uncle, and in the next year Thomas Steward of Ely, his maternal uncle. The King moved on towards

* The Protector, a Vindication, p. 43.

London, although he had been informed that 'the plague was raging in that city: a circumstance which vexed him exceedingly, as he was deficient in courage. But the crown of England awaited him there, and this rendered him superior to fear."

Many were the strange and conflicting hopes that hung on the arrival of Queen Elizabeth's successor to her ancient capital. Death had at length snatched the sceptre from the firm grasp of the last of the Tudors, whose wise but absolute sway had compelled the most resolute to defer their hopes of amelioration for felt or fancied wrongs. Many causes united in exciting hopes of the most opposite character from the policy or inclinations of her successor. With an assumption of absolute and nearly infallible power worthy of the daughter of Henry VIII., Queen Elizabeth had assigned to the national religion a definite form, which she guarded as sternly from the innovations of those who aimed at a nearer approach to the simplicity of the apostolic church—or the Puritan party, as they came afterwards to be called,—as from the Romish party, whose plots and treasonable schemes influenced nearly the whole foreign and domestic policy of her reign.

The accession of the Scottish King revived alike the hopes of the Puritans and the Romanists. The former trusted to his education under the rigid and austere Buchanan, and his practical approbation of Scottish Presbyterianism, as a guarantee for his sympathy with their desires for some modification of the ecclesiastical polity established in England; while the latter rested their hopes in him as the son of the murdered Queen Mary, whom they regarded as a martyr of their faith, and whose wrongs they believed her son must be burning to avenge. It is necessary that we bear these circumstances in mind, in order to understand the state of society in the midst of which young Oliver was reared, and the strange clash of parties by which he was environed almost from his cradle.

Of his youthful years many strange tales are told; nearly all of which may be ascribed to the malevolence or narrow prejudices of royalist biographers, and chiefly of Heath, in his *Flagellum*, a curious little volume of splenetic slander, adapted to the prejudices of the Restoration era. Except as an amusing sample of the spirit of the time, it is of no value; yet it has furnished the chief materials by which the prejudices of that age have been perpetuated to our own. Heath was, according to Forster, "the son of Charles I.'s cutler, an exiled royalist, and was, moreover, a needy scribe, who wrote phamphlets of all sorts to order, and corrected manuscripts for a maintenance." Such is the authority on whose narrations we mainly depend for accounts of precocity in vice and an ineradicable coarse ness, which, as far as there is any truth in the traditions, resolve themselves into the fact, that the youthful Cromwell displayed—like many other youths that afterwards bear a prominent share in the active duties of life,—an indomitable energy, not unlikely to prove at times troublesome to grave seniors who had forgot their own boyish days That he climbed the great Huntingdon oak, in search of birds' nests; roamed the marshes and fens, in pursuit of game; escaped drowning only by the intervention of a "divine right" loyalist curate, who afterwards deplored having rescued the Puritan leader from a watery grave; and even that he sometimes scared the quiet cotters of the fens with his reckless pranks; are all likely enough, and may be received without very rigid inquiry. The indomitable energy that carried him through the stirring scenes of his later life without a reverse, must have dwelt in the boy, and manifested its presence by some species of activity.

Of such tales as the following, there is much more reason to be sceptical. "The child's temper," says Forster, * "it seems admitted on all hands, was wayward

* Forster s Life of Cromwell, vol. 1 p. 11.

and violent, and is said to have broken out on one occasion, when he was yet only five years old, with an ominous forecast of times and deeds to come. The anecdote is told by Noble. 'They have a tradition at Huntingdon,' says that industrious collector, 'that when King Charles I., then Duke of York, in his journey from Scotland to London, called, in his way, at Hinchinbrook, the seat of Sir Oliver Cromwell, that knight, to divert the young prince, sent for his nephew Oliver, that he, with his own sons, might play with his royal highness: but they had not been long together, before Charles and Oliver disagreed; and as the former was then as weakly as the latter was strong, it was no wonder that the royal visitant was worsted; and Oliver, even at this age, so little regarded dignity, that he made the royal blood flow in copious streams from the prince's nose. This was looked upon as a bad presage for that king when the civil wars commenced. I give this only as the report of the place: thus far is certain, that Hinchinbrook, as being near Huntingdon, was generally one of the resting-places, when any of the royal family were going to or returning from the north of England, or into or from Scotland.' An anecdote, which somehow bears upon it the stamp and greatness of reality! If these boys ever met, (and when King James's frequent visits to Hinchinbrook are borne in mind it is difficult to suppose they did not,) what occurrence so likely as a quarrel, and what result so plain as that the anecdote tells us? The nervous, feeble, tottering infancy of the shambling King's son, unequally matched against the sturdy little limbs and daring young soul of the man-child of the Huntingdon brewer—yet foolish obstinacy urging the weakness of the one, and a reckless ambition of superiority overcoming the kindness and generosity of the other. The curtain of the future was surely for an instant upraised here!

"Nor here alone. More signal and direct manifestations

were avouched, if still stronger and more widely believed traditions are received. Nor will they be rejected hastily by such as care to penetrate beneath the surface of the character which had lain, as it were, wrapped up even in the very cradle of this child. The supernatural, as it seems to the vulgar, is not always what it seems. The natural, when denied for a time its proper vent, will force itself into the light in many various shapes, which assume a fearful aspect from their intensity alone. The tame and common medium of dull and feeble minds is not what the world has distributed among all her sons. Thoughts, as their sufferer has himself described them, 'like masterless hell-hounds,' roared and bellowed round the cradle of Bunyan;—round that of Vane the forms of angels of light seemed to vision the everlasting reign of peace which his virtuous labours would have realized;—and now, round the bed of the youthful Cromwell, played an awful yet delicious dream of personal aggrandisement and power.

"He had laid himself down one *day*, it is said, too fatigued with his youthful sports to hope for sleep, when suddenly the curtains of his bed were slowly withdrawn by a gigantic figure which bore the aspect of a woman, and which, gazing at him silently for a while, told him that he should, before his death, be the greatest man in England. He remembered when he told the story—and the recollection marked the current of his thoughts—that the figure had not made mention of the word *king*. The tradition of Huntingdon adds, that although the 'folly and wickedness' of such a notion was strongly pointed out to him, the lad presisted in the assertion of its truth—for which, 'at the particular desire of his father,' he was soundly flogged by his schoolmaster. The flogging only impressed the fact more deeply on the young day-dreamer, and betaking himself immediately to his uncle Steward, for the purpose of unburthening himself once more respecting it, he was told by that worthy kins-

man of royalty that it was 'traitorous to entertain such thoughts.'

"This incident in Cromwell's youth was not forgotten in his obscurity to be remembered only in his eminence; for Clarendon distinctly tells us, that 'it was generally spoken of, even from the beginning of the troubles, and when he was not in a posture that promised such exaltation.' In the height of his glory, we have also good authority for saying, Cromwell himself mentioned it often; and when the farce of deliberation took place on the offer of the crown to the Protector, it is remarked by Lord Clarendon, that 'they who were very near to him said, that, in this perplexity, he revolved his former dream or apparition, that had first informed and promised him the high fortune to which he was already arrived, and which was generally spoken of, even from the beginning of the troubles, and when he was not in a posture that promised such exaltation; and that he then observed, it had only declared that he should be the greatest man in England, and that he should be near to be king, which seemed to imply, that he should be only near, and never actually attain, the crown.' "

Notwithstanding all the evidence produced in proof of these marvellous foreshadowings of young Oliver's future career, they scarcely deserve notice, and may be unhesitatingly referred to the fertile fancies of such biographers as Heath, who reproaches *Nature*, that she, "by her most secret and hidden malice, brought him into the world without any terrible remark of his portentous life; neither comets, nor earthquakes, nor such like violences of nature, ushering or accompanying him, to the declaring and pointing out that the scourge of the English empire and nation was now born!"

Oliver Cromwell grew up amid the kindly influences of such boyish sports and pastimes as the fields and the companions of Huntingdon and Hinchinbrook afforded. He

studied, doubtless sometimes in no willing mood, under the harsh discipline of Dr. Beard, master of Huntingdon free school; whose memory still lives as one notorious for severity in an age when discipline too frequently lapsed into barbarous cruelty. He learned too,—however heedless of it at the time,—many lessons that long after bore noticeable fruit, as he listened to the earnest converse around the domestic hearth. The time was ripening for action; nor were there wanting stirring events to stamp indellible impressions on his mind. He was only six years old when the memorable fifth of November, with its gunpowder plot—still remembered in some sort by youths of our own day,—spread terror and forebodings, not unmingled with pious thanksgivings, through the remotest corners of England. It was a time, indeed, when the contest between devout Puritanism and high church Prelacy threatened to be swallowed up in the older strife of Protestantism and Popery; and honest Protestants of every shade of opinion began at least to think of union as once more possible against the common enemy. Annual thanksgivings, no less than the grave converse of his seniors round the old hearth at Huntingdon, kept alive in young Oliver's mind the dark Popish plot of November 1605, until his eleventh year, when rumour again brought the first vague note of a more successful blow aimed at Protestantism. Henry of Navarre, who narrowly escaped the bloody vengeance of the massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1576, to become the champion of continental Protestantism, in 1598, the year before Oliver's birth, had given, by the edict of Nantes, what he designed as full redress of grievances to his Protestant subjects. It was an unpardonable crime for which his life was repeatedly attempted by fanatic assassins; and at length Protestant and Popish Europe learned, with rejoicings or with dismay, that on the 14th of May, 1610, Henry of France and Navarre was stabbed to death in his carriage, by the dagger of a Popish assassin.

It was an event well worthy of note even among the quiet dwellers at Huntingdon. James I. of England—vain, timid, and ever swayed by the most powerful influences that his ill-balanced mind could comprehend,—had been held in some degree of check, and made to profess at least some consistent zeal for Protestantism, while Henry lived. Thenceforward very different interests prevailed. Spanish influence and Spanish gold wrought strange contradictions in English policy; sufficed even to purchase at very moderate price the blood of one of England's noblest sons,—Sir Walter Raleigh, the hated enemy of Spain, as of all England's enemies. These and matters of less importance—some of them very important, however, though little noted at the time,—were occurring, and exercising their influence on the bold, silent, yet ever active boy. Hinchinbrook, with its gay sportings and festivities; its huntings and maskings and Christmas mummings; its royal progresses and entertainments; had many attractions for young Oliver. It is curious, indeed, to note these gay meetings and sportings of the future rivals for crown and kingdom. Here in earlier days came the boy, Prince Charles, a younger son, destined, perchance, like the Tudor Henry, for the mitre of Canterbury; and with him the Huntingdon squire's son;—good enough to sport with and be forgotten. With them, too, in all likelihood, came cousin Hampden. John Hampden, then a lively youth, some five years older than his cousin Oliver; a gentle, kindly dispositioned boy, who perchance tempered the sturdy impetuosity of young Cromwell;—yet firm enough, as it afterwards proved, when great principles were at stake. Strange too, seems the coincidence, when, of all archdeaconries in England, "little Dr. Laud was made Archdeacon of Huntingdon."

Oliver was learning in all ways. The gaieties of Hinchinbrook, the gravity of Huntingdon, the severities of Dr. Beard's school-room; all had their influence in working out

the character of the man. It is worthy of notice, however, that when Oliver long after rose for the first time to address the House of Commons in indignant protest at the "*flat Popery*" preached by Dr. Alabaster at St. Paul's Cross, his authority was Dr. Beard, Oliver's old school-master, as it afterwards appeared; a most significant note, throwing far more intelligible light on the boy's early training than all the idle stories of his old biographers. But most influential of all was the home-teaching—best of schools. There is a truthfulness of character in Heath's picture of Robert Cromwell that gives credit to the portraiture. "The relation of a father," says the author of the *Flagellum*, "and one so stern and strict an examiner of him,—he being in his nature of a difficult disposition and great spirit, and one that would have due distances observed towards him from all persons, which begat him reverence from the country-people,—kept him in some awe and subjection." A grave religious man, in fact, ruling his house with strictness, and with some severity, as accorded with the opinions of his party and age,—a safe severity on the whole, however,—tempered as it was by the genial kindliness and love of his noble wife.

Such then was the schooling of young Oliver until the close of his sixteenth year, when he quitted the grammar-school of Huntingdon to enter as a fellow commoner of Sydney-Sussex College, Cambridge. "On the Feast of the Annunciation," says the register of the college, "Oliver Cromwell of Huntingdon was admitted; his tutor Mr. Richard Howlet." Carlyle, who delights in noting coincidences, has not failed to observe another incident memorable in English annals, that transpired on the same 23d of April, 1616, on which young Oliver entered on the wider sphere of college-life. "Curious enough," says he,*

* Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches. By Thomas Carlyle. vol. i. p 60.

"of all days, on this same day, Shakspeare, as his stone monument still testifies at Stratford-on-Avon, died:

"*Obut Anno Domini* 1616.
Ætatis 53. *Die* 23 *Apr.*

While Oliver Cromwell was entering himself of Sidney-Sussex College, William Shakspeare was taking his farewell of this world. Oliver's father had, most likely, come with him; it is but twelve miles from Huntingdon; you can go and come in a day. Oliver's father saw Oliver write in the album at Cambridge: at Stratford, Shakspeare's Ann Hathaway was weeping over his bed. The first world-great thing that remains of English history, the Literature of Shakspeare, was ending; the second world-great thing that remains of English history, the armed Appeal of Puritanism to the Invisible God of Heaven against many very Visible Devils, on Earth and Elsewhere, was, so to speak, beginning. They have their exits and their entrances. And one people in its time plays many parts."

"Oliver's tutor," says the same writer, in his own quaint style,* "Oliver's tutor in Cambridge, of whom legible history and I know nothing, was 'Magister Richard Howlet:' whom readers must fancy a grave ancient Puritan and scholar, in dark antiquarian clothes and dark antiquarian ideas, according to their faculty. The indubitable fact is, that he Richard Howlet did, in Sidney-Sussex College, with his best ability, endeavour to infiltrate something that he called instruction into the soul of Oliver Cromwell and of other youths committed to him: but how, of what quality, with what method, with what result, will remain extremely obscure to every one. In spite of mountains of books, so are books written, all grows very obscure. About this same date, George Ratcliffe, Wentworth Strafford's George, at Oxford, finds his green-baize table-cover, which his mother had sent

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol 1. p. 62.

him, too small, has it cut into 'stockings,' and goes about with the same. So unfashionable were young gentlemen commoners" of England in those first years of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER II.

CONVERSION.

FEW as are the authentic glimpses that we obtain of Oliver Cromwell in his earlier years, the incidents of his life from time to time touch, in their quiet unheeded current, on the great stream of public events. James I., after many delays, at length, in 1617, resolved again to visit his ancient kingdom of Scotland, after an absence of fourteen years. The royal cavalcade took Hinchinbrook in their way once more,—most sumptuous stage in the old southward progress,—and Dr. Laud, with other prominent actors of a later date, went northward to sow "the dragon's teeth," from which bitter enough harvests were afterwards reaped.

Incidents, meanwhile, of deeper moment to young Oliver, were occurring at Huntingdon and elsewhere. In the month of June, 1617, a hasty summons called him from Cambridge to the death-bed of his father, to the last sad duties of chief mourner, as with tearful eyes he committed the monitor and counsellor of his youth to his last resting-place in the parish church of St. John, and returned to console, as best he might, the weeping circle round the old hearth. Other obsequies too marked that memorable year. William Steward, Esq., of Ely, lineal descendant of the old Lord High Steward, first of Scotland's Stuarts, was also borne to his last resting-place; leaving his daughter, now widowed and fatherless, with six daughters, and one surviving son, Oliver, to struggle as

best she might with the world's difficulties. If Oliver returned at all to Cambridge, it was for a very brief period. He had now to take his father's place, and follow, as well as may be, in his steps. His royalist detractors delight to enlarge on his neglect of all studies. "He was for some time," says Dugdale, "bred up in Cambridge, where he made no proficiency in any kind of learning;" and this, of course, receives ample corroboration from the unscrupulous pen of Heath. A youth whose studies were thus abruptly closed in the very first year of his attendance at college, and when he was only in his seventeenth year, was scarcely to be expected to prove a finished scholar; yet, however his learning was acquired, abundant evidence remains to show that he was no way deficient in it. He was able to converse freely with foreign ambassadors, in the Latin tongue. His high respect for men of learning, and his invariable patronage of genius and true scholarship, have never been questioned by his basest detractors; and while Milton represents him as possessing such a command of letters as adorned, without trammelling, his management of affairs, "choosing, in conducting the commonwealth, to imitate Cæsar rather than Cicero;" Waller and his royalist biographers acknowledge that "he was very well read in the Greek and Roman story."

Robert Cromwell, who, but for his illustrious son, would have passed down to the grave unknown, had lived as became a country gentleman of moderate wealth and good connections. He managed his estate as gentlemen farmers did then, and do still—breeding cattle, raising grain, malting it, as seems probable, when the plan promised to be more profitable; and in all honest ways turning the portion of a younger son to as good account as might be. Of public duties and burdens also, he bore his fair share. "For the rest," as Carlyle remarks,* "this Robert Cromwell did Burgh and Quarter-Session duties; was not slack but mo-

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 37

derately active as a country gentleman; sat once in parliament in his younger years; is found with his elder or other brothers on various public commissions for draining the fens of that region, or more properly for inquiring into the possibility of such an operation; a thing much noised of then; which Robert Cromwell, among others, reported to be very feasible, very promising, but did not live to see accomplished, or even attempted. His social rank is sufficiently indicated. Better than all social rank, he is understood to have been a wise, devout, steadfast and worthy man, and to have lived a modest and manful life in his station there."

These then were the cares and duties that devolved on Oliver; and for which chiefly qualification was now to be sought. Soon after this he proceeded to London; entered, it is said, of Lincoln's Inn; studied law enough to qualify him for undertaking to do "Burgh and Quarter-Session duties" like his father; and, more than all, afforded his royalist defamers ample scope for vague vituperation and slander. Any evidence of Cromwell's having led a vicious life while in London rests on such suspicious authority as may well justify an honest biographer in dismissing it with contempt. Cromwell did indeed speak of himself, as a greater before had done, as *the chief of sinners;* and pious Puritans afterwards, enlarging on the sinfulness of his unregenerate heart, "did," as Heath says, "thereby magnify his conversion, making him thus dear and precious unto God." All this, though *foolishness* to poor Heath and many another over-zealous cavalier, will be as intelligible to Christians of the nineteenth century, as it was to the Puritans of the seventeeth.

The evidence that contradicts the stories of Cromwell's "licentious outrages," his "lustful wantonness," his tippling, rioting, and all the rest of Heath's courtly slander, is on the very surface, and gives the lie to it at once. The fair scholarship he is proved to have possessed shows that

his brief and interrupted years of study were not wasted in idleness; and the vigour of his manhood betrays no relic of the enervating fruits of a licentious youth. But above all, we learn of Oliver's haunts in these first years of London life from incontrovertible evidence. The dissolute and abandoned rake,—who, according to Heath, returned to Huntingdon an unreclaimed prodigal, to waste his substance in riotous living, and make himself a shame and a terror to all who knew him,—proves, when we look even very superficially into the matter, to have relaxed from the studies, whose fruits were manifest in after life, by joining the social circle of a wealthy knight, who welcomed the young student to his house, and introduced him without fear to the company of his daughters. Sir James Bourchier, an opulent knight, possessed of estates in Essex and elsewhere, was the city host of young Cromwell, and his daughter Elizabeth the chief attraction to the house. A young lover, not yet in his twenty-first year, and with the mistress of his affections at hand, is armed against all the temptations of the voluptuary.

How many months or years the young pair basked in the smiles of love's sweet dream we know not, but the Registers of St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate, London—the same to whose dust is committed the dust of Milton—still record their marriage on the 22d of August, 1620.

This then was a memorable epoch in the life of Cromwell; a change "for better or worse," alterable only by death. The warmth of Cromwell's social and domestic affections is too apparent even for his maligners to assail. His love for his wife remained unaltered and enduring through all the changes of his eventful life. Even now we can picture the young bridegroom—only twenty-one years and four months old on his wedding day,—standing there in the old church, and with his bride's hand in his, vowing "to love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health, and forsaking all other, keep only

unto her, so long as both shall live." It was the same hand, then gently clasping that of Elizabeth Bourchier, that was to hew his way unvanquished through armed hosts, and sign the death-warrant of a king. From his marriage a new era began in Cromwell's history. He had got an help *meet for him;* a noble woman to be the partner of life's journey, who sustained with dignity the strange vicissitudes she had to pass through, and after adorning a court with the unobtrusive virtues of a sweet and generous nature controlled by the influences of sincere piety, she descended to poverty and neglect with the same dignity, and with more willingness, than she exchanged the quiet domestic duties of Huntingdon for a palace and a throne.

Oliver Cromwell returned to Huntingdon with his young wife; presented her to his mother as another daughter committed to her care; and thenceforth we find him, for years, pursuing the even tenor of his way, and sharing with his wife and noble mother the joys and sorrows that tend on wedded life. Sons and daughters were born to him, and one or more of them, committed, not without tears, to the same quiet resting place whither their grandfather, Robert Cromwell, had already been borne by his kinsmen. Many things, indeed, were learned in these years of domestic seclusion; lessons of far more momentous import than the Latin and Greek of Dr. Beard, or Mr. Richard Howlet. "The next ten years," says his recent *Vindicator,** "were passed in seclusion—years in which a man is formed for life. Cromwell busied himself in farming, and in industrial and social duties; living as his father before him had done. But he was also occupied with other matters. Erelong he felt in his heart the prickings of God's law. It disclosed to him his inward sin; with Saint Paul he was disposed to cry out: "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" and,

* The Protector, a Vindication, p. 47.

like Luther pacing the galleries of his convent at Erfurth, exclaiming, 'My sin! my sin!' Oliver, agitated and heart-wrung, uttering groans and cries as of a wounded spirit, wandered pale and dejected along the gloomy banks of the Ouse, beneath a clouded sky. He looked for consolation to God, to his Bible, and to friends more enlightened than himself. His health and even his strong frame were shaken; and in his melancholy he would often send at midnight for Dr. Simcott, physician at Huntingdon, supposing him to be dying. At length peace entered into his soul. 'It is therefore in these years,' says Carlyle, 'that we must place what Oliver, with unspeakable joy, would name his conversion—his deliverance from the jaws of eternal death. Certainly a grand epoch for a man: properly the one epoch.' The turning-point which guides upwards or guides downwards, him and his activity for evermore. 'He was henceforth a Christian man,' continues his biographer, 'not on Sundays only, but on all days, in all places, and in all cases.'

"Cromwell now zealously attended the Puritan ministry, and chose his friends from among the gentry and nobility of his neighbourhood who held the same opinions. He became intimate with Hampden and Pym, with the Lords Brook, Say, and Montague. Almost all the serious thought of England was then Puritan. In the midst of them was Oliver, modest, devout, conscientious, and earnestly intent 'to make his calling and election sure.'

"His intercourse with his friends was full of cordiality. He has been reproached with a fondness for buffoonery; but we must recollect that such a characteristic trait is often found in the most Christian and truly serious men. It is a weakness that is thrown off with difficulty. Many sallies and jests imputed to him have been grossly exaggerated, and made grievous charges against his piety. Some of these anecdotes, even if they are true, would only prove that Oliver occasionally talked inconsistently with

his principles; or, being less under their power, indulged in jesting and raillery, to which he was naturally prone. 'If two or three casual expressions,' says Dr. Harris, 'are to determine a man's character in opposition to his whole speech and behaviour, woe be to those who think themselves virtuous and good.' We must condemn all ill-timed levity; but we should also remember that no prince, descended from the blood of kings, ever showed himself more jealous of his dignity, on great occasions, than the Protector did. From his early youth he possessed true seriousness. He fervently devoted himself to works of Christian charity. 'Building of hospitals,' wrote he to his friend, Mr. Storie, in January 1636, 'provides for men's bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious.'

"An important work, as we have seen, was finished in Oliver during the nine or ten years of obscurity and seclusion that intervened between his marriage and his obtaining a seat in parliament. Milton, who knew him well, says of him: 'He had grown up in peace and privacy at home, silently cherishing in his heart a confidence in God, and a magnanimity well adapted for the solemn times that were approaching. Although of ripe years, he had not yet stepped forward into public life, and nothing so much distinguished him from all around as the cultivation of a pure religion, and the integrity of his life.'"

It is worthy of notice here how different is the course of Oliver Cromwell from what we must reasonably have anticipated according to the argument of his biographers for well nigh two centuries. Licentiousness is declared to have been the one object of his early years, and ambition the main incentive of his later course. Yet we find him, when scarcely of age, allying himself to an honourable family, and bringing home to his mother's house a

young and virtuous wife, with whom he settles down, contented with the quiet duties of his own household, and unseduced by the remembrance of the pleasures of the capital. These are not the fruits which such passions bring forth.

Amid many changes far and near we find Cromwell continuing to reside at the old family house of Huntingdon, in happy seclusion and unnoticeable peacefulness. A note of a son or daughter baptized at the old parish church of St. John's, Huntingdon, or the neighbouring one of All Saints, is frequently all that we can learn indubitably of his proceedings. Meanwhile, the ancestral manor-house of Hinchinbrook was fast loosing its old character won under the generous hospitality of the "Golden Knight." His son, Sir Oliver, had squandered his princely revenues, in royal entertainments, and vain extravagances of all sorts; and at length, not quite seven years after his nephew and godson had brought home his young wife to his widowed mother, and was himself become head of a house and manager of an estate, a deed of sale testifies that Hinchinbrook had passed away from the Cromwells into other hands. Estrangement, it seems probable, if not positive misunderstandings, had already sprung up between the impoverished Knight and his nephew. Stories, indeed, are preserved by Heath and his imitators of Christmas festivities at the old manor-house, disturbed by coarse practical jests of the young rake, and visited forthwith by cold duckings in a neighbouring horse-pond; all which the reader may believe or not without greatly affecting the later biography of Cromwell. The old Knight, with his foolish hospitalities and senseless loyalty, does not appear to have been one likely to "set down aught in malice," or treasure up the boy's pranks to produce them against the man, when he had put away childish things. "As for the old Knight," says Carlyle, "he seems to have been a man of

easy temper; given to sumptuosity of hospitality, and averse to severer duties. When his eldest son, who also showed a turn for expense, presented him with a schedule of debts, craving aid towards the payment of them, Sir Oliver answered with a bland sigh, '*I wish they were paid!*'" Good natured as we see, and very indifferent to most matters, saving that of outshining all courtiers of England, in bravery of feast and furnishing—which, indeed, he contrived to do for a time, with sufficient reward, —it seems most likely that nephew Oliver was welcome to his open table so long as he choose to come, and not greatly missed when he stayed away. Sir Oliver, however, was of course a keen royalist, and stickler for "rights divine," while his nephew at no time greatly favoured such opinions; and had evidently, latterly been adopting others which proved very irreconcilable with any such ideas.

Sir Oliver Cromwell removed, on the sale of Hinchinbrook, to a smaller house and estate, at Ramsey, in the Fens, which he had contrived to save from the general withering-up of his sumptuous inheritance; and there, as we shall afterwards find, his nephew did visit him in after years, under circumstances sufficiently characteristic of both. Now, however, we have to look upon Cromwell in a new character. He had become an altogether changed man. Whether we believe, with Heath and other over-zealous royalists, that he had been during his early years abandoned to every vice; or, as seems more likely, that he had grown up under strict parental rule an active, restless, and spirited boy, with no greater failings and no fewer virtues, than are usually developed in such a spirit by wise domestic training—still the change was an altogether momentous one; a "passing from death to life;" a becoming, not in name only, but in fact, a Christian. We believe that he really did become so, and though no more free from many failings, than others who have borne, in

sincerity of heart, the Christian name, yet that the vital principles of religion continued thenceforth to influence him through all the trying vicissitudes of his eventful

CHAPTER III.

ENTRY ON PUBLIC LIFE.

On Sunday 27th March, 1625, James, the first monarch of Great Britain, expired; not without strong suspicion of poisoning. However the event was brought about, Britain had little seeming cause to mourn. England's splendour and glory under her maiden queen was vanishing as a forgotten dream. Her virtue, and her honest protest against Popish error and the tyranny of priestcraft, were fast being superseded by the vainest assumptions of pride and weakness, amid the derision of Europe. A nation's hopes were centred in the prince who succeeded to the throne. A change from evil must ever be pregnant with hope; and here the promise seemed well based. Charles I. was in the vigour of youth, at the age of twenty-five; with morals seemingly uncontaminated by the corruptions of a court, and many amiable traits of genial affection and the domestic virtues, still more rarely cherished then than now, in such an atmosphere. Pensions, which under the stringent policy of Elizabeth had never exceeded L.18,000, rose under her successor to L.80,000. Protestantism, the cause of liberty of conscience and Bible truth; which under Elizabeth was maintained—though not without characteristic despotic restraints, yet with unchanging firmness against all external opposition—had well nigh ended, under James, in a detested Spanish alliance. No wonder that England was filled with joy and

hope. Scarcely had the House of Commons assembled, when Sir Benjamin Rudyard, hitherto an opponent of the court, rose and moved that henceforth nothing should be omitted that could tend to secure perfect harmony between the King and people. "For" said he, "what may we not expect from Charles being king; his good natural disposition, his freedom from vice, his travels abroad, his being bred in parliament, all promise greatly." It seemed indeed the advent of a constitutional monarchy that should secure happiness and liberty to England. A time of hope, however, is also necessarily one of jealous watchfulness against encroachments; and neither Charles nor the English nation understood then how strangely at variance were the tendencies of the King, nursed into bigoted faith in divine rights and absolute prerogatives by the weak pride of his father, whose loquacious pedantry had only sufficed to unmask its deformity; and the people struggling in half-awakened consciousness towards the assertion of political liberty and social rights.

The policy of James had done much to awaken the nation to a sense of their wrongs. The scornful rejection of the first moderate demands of the Puritan party on his accession to the throne silenced them indeed for a time; but only with the certainty that their next demands would be larger and in less suppliant terms. It was a movement, the origin of which must be looked for in earlier history, and which, sooner or later, had either to be strangled by despotism, or satisfied by just concessions. Let us glance for a moment at its birth ere we examine it in detail, when it rose up in matured strength to avenge insulted endurance. When Queen Elizabeth succeeded to the throne of her wretched sister, her first step was to restore the Church to the state in which it was at the death of Edward VI. No one, however, will venture to affirm that that was looked upon by any of the Reformers as a perfected work. On the contrary, Southey con-

gratulates the Church on his timely death, as upon the whole a providential circumstance, preventing those radical innovations that were otherwise designed on its venerable but cumbrous polity. Nevertheless, "the frame of ecclesiastical polity now set up, being in all essential particulars the same that now subsists, was zealously and steadily maintained by Elizabeth to the end of her reign. The Church of England has good reason to look upon her and Cecil as the true planters and rearers of its authority. They had soon to defend it against the Puritans on the one hand, as well as against the Catholics on the other; and they yielded to the former as little as to the latter. The Puritans had been growing in the country ever since the dawn of the Reformation; but they first made their appearance in any considerable force in the parliament which met in 1570. At first their attempts were met on the part of the crown by evasive measures and slight checks; but, in 1587, on four members of the House of Commons presenting to the House a bill for establishing a new Directory for public worship, Elizabeth at once gave orders that they should be seized and sent to the Tower, where they were kept some time. The High Commission Court also, which was established by a clause in one of the acts for the settlement of religion passed in the first year of her reign, was, occasionally at least, prompted or permitted to exercise its authority in the punishment of what was called heresy, and in enforcing uniformity of worship with great strictness. The determination upon which the Queen acted in these matters, as she expressed it in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was, 'that no man should be suffered to decline either to the left or to the right hand, from the drawn line limited by authority, and by her laws and injunctions.' Besides the deprivation of their livings, which many of the clergy underwent for their refusal to comply with certain particulars of the established ritual, many other persons

suffered imprisonment for violations of the statute of uniformity." *

The boldest of the Protestant party hesitated to interfere at first, with a power to which they owed their very existence. But what was the Church thus established by Elizabeth? Southey himself tells us,† that out of 9,400 beneficed clergy, the priests who had daily celebrated mass during the reign of "Bloody Mary," only 177 resigned their cures, acting as it seems on a preconcerted policy, by which they both kept out true Protestant ministers, and fostered in their parishioners the old superstitions, in hope of future change. Southey congratulates the Church on this fortunate occurrence, since it rendered the transition from Popery to Protestantism so easy. It was only putting off the evil day however, and Charles perished in the struggle which Elizabeth might have averted: while even in our own day not a few of the troubles and the heresies of the Church may be traced to the pliant conformity of these Marian clergy. The grievance of patrons presenting such ministers as pleased them best to the parish churches of England, became ever more unendurable, as Protestantism, and its faith in a personal responsibility, grew, in defiance of hireling pastors. Peaceably, if possible, Christian congregations sought to mend such evils; by purchase becoming themselves the patrons where it might be; by supplementary lectureships, or even supplementary churches and chapels, when the buying of such Christian rights might not be; much indeed by the same means as we have seen Simeon and Venn, and other Christian churchmen of our own day seeking to right matters that seemed once more gone strangely wrong. Laud, however, once Archdeacon of Huntingdon, but now prime adviser of the Crown in all matters ecclesiastical, and in sundry other matters besides, had strong and

* Queen Elizabeth.—Penny Cyclopædia.
† Southey's Book of the Church, vol. ii. p. 268.

altogether insurmountable objections to any such Puritan tendencies. So far contrary indeed were his own well-known inclinations, that when at length the long-coveted archiepiscopal throne became vacant, the offer by the Pope of a cardinal's hat actually preceded the gift of the mitre of Canterbury, and Laud consulted the King on the proffered honour, evidently with no great disinclination to the scarlet hat. To such a primate and minister as this Puritan patrons and lecturers were alike distasteful, and indeed altogether intolerable. Added to other grievances, the King, who had before his accession gladdened the whole nation by renouncing a Spanish alliance, not long after his obtaining the crown shared its honours with a popish queen, Henrietta of France, an ambitious, intriguing, unprincipled woman, educated in all the duplicity and double-dealing of the French court. She arrived in England fortified by a marriage contract drawn up with the advice and approval of the Pope, and accompanied by a retinue of priests, who in various ways wrought no little trouble and sorrow to the King.

Here then were the strangest elements of strife all driven into collision. Puritanism gathering strength in many ways, and uniting its forces for the attainment of its objects; while yet altogether unconscious of its powers; and in the face of it, a primate, to whom a cardinal's hat proved a temptation; and a queen, exercising the strongest influence on the young monarch, with her own sole advisers Popish father-confessors, and Jesuit priests. It seems little better than a magazine of combustibles, which a spark may at any moment kindle into a blaze. While matters were thus approaching a crisis, "a modest devout man," a gentleman of moderate estate, was residing at his own homely mansion at Huntingdon, busy with many things of the utmost moment, but which excited no notice among these high dignitaries. Oliver Cromwell, as appears from such glimpses as we have of him at this period,

was gradually winning a position of high respect and influence among the circle of his own neighbourhood as a man of shrewd sagacity and honest earnestness of purpose. Many of the gentry of his own rank, as well as some peers of the realm, already seconded with all their influence the efforts of the more serious part of the community, for securing an honest and faithful ministry. Direct evidence appears to show that Cromwell took an active part in the scheme for providing lecturers and purchasing presentations to livings. In all ways he evidently more and more allied himself to the Protestant or Puritan party, then assuming distinct form. He mixed with the yeomanry around him, and learned to know the worth of a class whose hardy virtues he afterwards turned to such good account. "Already" says Carlyle, "either in conscious act, or in clear tendency, the far greater part of the serious thought and manhood of England had declared itself Puritan." Already, too, however, unconsciously, the Puritan leader was in training for his mighty task.

Oliver Cromwell being now, according to the eloquent panegyric of Milton, "arrived at a ripe and mature age, all which time he had spent as a private person, noted for nothing so much as the cultivation of pure religion, and integrity of life; enlarging his hopes with reliance in God for any, the most exalted times, he nursed his great soul silently within his own breast." The time, however, drew near when he was no longer to exercise his great faculties in the narrow sphere of his own neighbourhood, but to enter on the arena of public life wherein he played so mighty a part. Charles I. had already found parliaments the most untractable of kingly instruments of power. Supplies were scarcely to be had without them, and so Charles summoned them once and again, but always with the same result. Supply him indeed they would, with all reasonable amount of funds, but only in return for

grievances redressed; an interchange of favours by no means even tolerable to that monarch. Two parliaments had accordingly been dismissed in the most summary manner; and trial given of forced loans, ship-money, and every other conceivable mode of raising supplies; but with altogether feeble and insufficient results. Debts at home and disasters abroad, pressed on the exhausted exchequer their ever increasing demands; with a pension list, which had expanded in the very first year of his reign to L.120,000, for purposes amply supplied under the wiser economy of Queen Elizabeth by L.18,000. Charles at length, driven from all his resources, turned in desperation to seek advice beyond his own circle of pliant courtiers, and appealed to the celebrated Sir Robert Cotton, the mildest of the popular party, for advice in this dilemma. His reply was, "Summon a parliament." Writs were accordingly issued once more, and one of the most memorable parliaments in the history of England hastened to answer the royal summons. Pym, Knolles, Hampden, Philips, Eliot, Selden, and others already known in public life, are there; and with them, for the first time, appears Oliver Cromwell, member for Huntingdon.

Forster has drawn with a somewhat free, but yet impartial hand, the probable appearance of the new member for Huntingdon on his first appearance in parliament, in company with his cousin, John Hampden. "Let us suppose," says he,* "that he and Hampden entered the house together at the momentous opening of that famous parliament,—two men already linked to each other by the bonds of counsel and of friendship yet more than by those of family, but presenting how strange a contrast to each other in all things, save the greatness of their genius The one of exquisitely mild deportment, of ever civil and affable manners, with a countenance that at once expressed the dignity of his intellect and the sweetness of

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 41.

his nature; and even in his dress, arranged with scrupulous nicety and care, announcing the refinement of his mind. The other, a figure of no mean mark, but oh, how unlike that! His gait clownish, his dress ill-made and slovenly, his manners coarse and abrupt, and face such as men look on with a vague feeling of admiration and dis like! The features cut, as it were, out of a piece of gnarled and knotty oak; the nose large and red; the cheeks coarse, warted, wrinkled, and sallow; the eyebrows huge and shaggy, but, glistening from beneath them eyes full of depth and meaning, and, when turned to the gaze, piercing through and through the gazer; above these, again, a noble forehead, whence, on either side, an open flow of hair 'round from his parted forelock manly hangs,' clustering; and over all, and pervading all, that undefinable aspect of greatness alluded to by the poet Dryden, when he spoke of the face of Cromwell as one that

'Did imprint an awe,
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw,
And point to beds where sovereign gold doth grow.'

Imagine, then, these two extraordinary men, now for the first time together, passing along the crowded lobbies of that most famous assembly,—Hampden greeting his friends as he passes, stopping now and then, perhaps, to introduce his country kinsman to the few whose curiosity had mastered the first emotion inspired by the singular stranger, but pushing directly forward towards a knot of active and eager faces that are clustered round a little spot near the bar of the house, on the right of the speaker's chair, in the midst of which stand Sir John Eliot, Sir Robert Philips, and Pym. The crowd make way for Hampden—the central figures of that group receive him amongst them with deference and gladness—he introduces his cousin Cromwell—and, among the great spirits whom that little spot contains, the clownish figure, the awkward gait, the slovenly dress, pass utterly un-

heeded; for, in his first few words, they have discovered the fervour, and, perhaps, suspected the greatness, of this accession to their cause."

It is a parliament very memorable to England for other reasons besides this first appearance of Cromwell. It was the last meeting of kingly prerogative and constitutional power wherein both still indulged the thought of mutual concessions and ultimate co-operation. Their relative positions, however, had strangely altered since Charles's accession had been the subject of national joy. Since then the King had almost learned to look on parliaments as things necessary, however painful; evils that must be endured and turned to account; however mortifying the needful self-control should prove; while parliaments were acquiring larger and more distinct notions of their own claims to govern; framing Petitions of Rights; insisting on examinations of grievances; and altogether showing manifest tendencies towards the opinion, since very fully developed, that the *right divine*, involving all other rights, belongs to the people, as an inalienable gift from Him who made of one blood all that dwell on the face of the earth. It had seemed to Charles no less unreasonable than unjust, that his very first parliament should begin with an inquiry into grievances. "He thought," says M. Guizot, "that the people should fear nothing from him, as he had done no ill; the people, that all the sources of past ills should be extirpated, that nothing might be feared for the future." Strange enough, neither the King nor his flatterers could perceive, that if the inheritor of James's throne rested only on his own innocence, without renouncing the aggressions of his predecessor, the people had too good reason to fear that they would be maintained as a part of his inheritance. It was indeed a critical position of affairs, wherein the Commons could not take a step for the maintenance of their liberties without bringing into question their devotion to the

crown. When the third parliament of Charles assembled, matters had acquired a very different aspect. The King had only summoned parliament after the failure of every attempt to reign without it; and grievances enough remained to be redressed, not the least of which was the state of religion.

In its first session it passed the famous Petition of Rights; censured the preacher of Popery, Mainwaring; and named the royal favourite, Buckingham, as the source and adviser of England's grievances; nevertheless it reached a second session, only to discover that "Tonnage and Poundage" had been illegally levied, in defiance of the Bill of Rights, received so recently with bonfires, bell-ringings, and every demonstration of national joy. Nay, it was even found that an altogether different and evasive form had been given by royal authority to the printed copies of the Bill of Rights: and, that their censures of the preacher of Popery had only led to greater preferment. No wonder than the House reassembled in no very peaceful humour. Grievances more than ever absorbed its whole attention, and one of its first steps was to resolve itself into a Committee on Religion, during the brief proceedings of which the new member for Huntingdon, Oliver Cromwell, for the first time addressed the House of Commons, and obtained respectful audience, notwithstanding the distaste that his rusticity of garb and address excited in the minds of fastidious courtiers. His complaint was "that Dr. Alabaster had preached *flat Popery* at St. Paul's Cross; and that the Bishop of Winchester had commanded him, as his diocesan, that he should preach nothing to the contrary."

Mainwaring, as it already appeared, had found the censures and penalties of the House for such practices rather favourable than otherwise, and here were others taking the same course. "If these are the steps to Church preferment," added Cromwell, "what are we to

expect?" What indeed! but flat Popery in all pulpits, and from all preachers thereafter. Strong measures were required. The Bishop of Winchester, and even Archbishop Laud himself, were threatened with the wrath of the Commons, when the King once more interfered. The only object he had ever assembled them for was to grant him the power of levying taxes legally; and this he had hoped to persuade them to do by one act for his whole reign; but their very last resolution, carried with locked doors, and in defiance of the messages of the King, declared the levying of tonnage and poundage,—a tax similar to our custom-house duties,—illegal; and pronounced those to be guilty of high treason who should levy or even pay them.

Parliament was forthwith dissolved in the most summary manner; its leading members were subjected to fines, imprisonment, and other tokens of royal displeasure. The King set himself resolutely to govern alone, and did govern, or misgovern, in some way, without interference of parliaments, for above eleven years. Cromwell and most other country members returned home, and the King flattered himself for a time that he was well rid of them. Cromwell, however, occupied a very different position now. He had chosen his side, had seen its bold struggles, and had shared in them sufficiently to show the leaders of the popular cause that they obtained in him no slight accession to their party. The long interval during which the nation and the King of England were, in voiceless struggle, to strive for rights and power, ere another parliament could assemble, was a momentous period of schooling to Cromwell and all other political leaders, and indeed to all Englishmen, of whatever rank. The severance between King and people was not the less certainly progressing, although no assembled representatives claimed the righting of grievances.

CHAPTER IV.

SHIP-MONEY AND THE SCOTS SERVICE-BOOK.

On the sudden and ominous dissolution of parliament Cromwell returned to Huntingdon and resumed his former course of life; thenceforth maintaining, however, frequent intercourse with Hampden and other patriot leaders. We find evidence thereafter of his continuing to perform the duties of justice of the peace at Huntingdon; but about two years after the termination of the parliament he sold a great part of his estates there, and removed to St. Ives, about five miles distant, where he rented extensive lands, and greatly enlarged his farming operations. There it was that he chiefly exercised the influence of his master-spirit over the yeomen and tenantry of the district, which afterwards was turned to such good account in the civil war. "In the tenants that rented from him," says Forster,* "in the labourers that took service under him, he sought to sow the seeds of his after-troop of Ironsides. He achieved an influence through the neighbourhood all around him, unequalled for piety and self-denying virtue. The greater part of his time, even upon his farm, was passed in devotional exercises, and expositions, and prayer. Who prays best will work best—who preaches best will fight best—all the famous doctrines of his later and more celebrated years were tried and tested on the little farm at St. Ives. His servants were taught that, however inferior to the lords of the earth they might be in worldly circumstances, there were yet claims of loftier concern in which they had equal share, and in the right understanding of which their humanity might exalt itself to the level

* Forster's Life of Cromwell. vol. i. p. 48.

of the proudest. He did not drudge them from rising to setting sun, as if they had been merely beasts of burden; he left them, at intervals, to ponder on the momentous fact, that even *they* had immortal souls. Before going to their field-work in the morning they knelt down with their master in the touching equality of prayer; in the evening they shared with him again the comfort and exaltation of divine precepts, and were taught the inexpressible value of the religion that is practical, and tends to elevate, not to depress, the soul.

"In St. Ives, to this day, significant memorials of Cromwell exist, which strangely and deeply connect themselves, even at this distance of time, with those solemn scenes. A vast number of swords are scattered round the neighbourhood, bearing on their hilts the initials, O. C. They have descended from the farmers and labourers of the times we are retracing, to the possession of their present owners. For in 1641, when the sky foretold the imminent storm, a large supply of swords was sent to the district of St. Ives, marked with those initials, for which, some few months after, the sum of L.100 was voted to Cromwell in acknowledgment of the outlay and the zeal. With the Bible he had before given them in one hand, and the sword he then gave them in the other, those old tenants and labourers of St. Ives afterwards formed part of that immortal phalanx which was never known to yield or be beaten in battle."

To infer, however, from this, as some writers have done, that Cromwell was at this time meditating projects of daring ambition, and secretly laying plans for their accomplishment, is altogether gratuitous, and without a shadow of proof. His farm occupied him, to some extent, with, as seems probable, only partial success. Religion, also, both in its national and personal bearings, engrossed much of his thoughts. First among Carlyle's letters of Cromwell, is one to his "very loving friend Mr. Storie," pre-

viously published in part or whole by Harris, Forster, and other biographers, from which we discover him taking an active part in the old object of providing pious lecturers to supply the shortcomings of the regular clergy. As the need became more apparent, however, the possibility of supply became ever more difficult. For Laud had determined on abolishing these and all other refuges of conscientious nonconformity; even if needs be with bloody mutilations, slitting noses, cropping off ears, and other horrible exhibitions of tyranny, at which the heart sickens in the perusing.

In the year 1630, Dr. Leighton, father of the celebrated Archbishop, had been arrested by a warrant from the High Commission Court, for publishing "An Appeal to Parliament, or Zion's Plea against Prelacy," a work absolutely blasphemous in the estimation of Laud. He was condemned to be set in the pillory, to have his ears cut off, his nostrils slit, his cheeks branded with hot-irons, and to be publicly whipped. The sentence was executed in all its horrible severity, and the unhappy victim thereafter incarcerated in a loathsome dungeon, from whence, when he was at length released by the long parliament, after breathing its noisome air for upwards of eleven years, he could neither walk, see, nor hear. When the petition which gave an account of the dreadful barbarity of his treatment was read in the House of Commons, its reading was frequently interrupted by the members, who were moved to weeping; yet Laud, who had sat by to hear his victim condemned, pulled off his hat, and lifting up his hands, gave thanks to God who had given him the victory over his enemies.

The year 1633 is memorable in our historic annals on various accounts. Once more a royal cavalcade passed through Huntingdon; for Charles, weary of strife with the perverse subjects of his southern kingdom, had resolved to visit the ancient capital of his fathers, and, somewhat

tardily, to be crowned King of Scots. His reception in his native capital was as loyal as kingly heart could desire; L.41,000, Scottish money, were spent by the magistracy of Edinburgh in quaint maskings and festivities, in which the poet Drummond of Hawthornden, lent efficient aid; and this hearty reception was followed by his coronation, on the 18th of June, in the Abbey Church of Holyrood, with the utmost pomp and splendour. Unhappily, however, poor Charles had no wise counsellor near him to bid him be thankful that he had one corner of the empire where his presence was still hailed with unmingled rejoicings. The King, with the strangest fatality, had brought with him to Presbyterian Scotland scarcely another adviser than Bishop Laud; and no other panacea for all its ills than a plan for establishing an Episcopal regimen, and a ritual worship; more perfect—according to Dr. Laud's ideas of perfection—than that which Queen Elizabeth had willed so effectually in England. It may justly be said of Laud that, fitted to rule a college, he was selected to govern a kingdom.

There is much force in the brief epitome of his character drawn by Guizot:* "Austere in his conduct, simple in his life, power, whether he served it or himself wielded it, inspired in his mind a fanatical devotion. To prescribe and to punish, this was in his eyes to establish order, and order ever seemed to him justice. His activity was indefatigable, but narrow in its views, violent, and harsh. Alike incapable of conciliating opposing interests, and of respecting rights, he rushed, with head down and eyes closed, at once against liberties and abuses; opposing to the latter his rigid probity, to the former his furious hate. He was as abrupt and uncompromising with the courtiers as with the citizens; seeking no man's friendship, anticipating and able to bear no resistance, persuaded, in short, that power is all-sufficient in pure hands; and constantly

* History of English Revolution, Hazlitt's Translation, p. 39.

the prey of some fixed idea, which ruled him with all the violence of passion, and all the authority of duty."

It took some four years before the new Scottish system reached its perfection. Meanwhile the old collegiate and parish church of St. Giles at Edinburgh, became for the first time a cathedral; Edinburgh itself became a city and the seat of a bishopric; and doubtless, Dr. Laud flattered himself that things were already in a very promising state.

Returning to England, Laud found other matters needing to be put to rights. William Prynne, a pious lawyer, had, in the strangest manner, incurred his wrath by writing a book to expose the excesses of masking and stage playing, for which he and two others guilty of similar *enormities*, were, before the close of this year, 1633, put on the pillory, had their ears cut off, and were condemned to imprisonment and the payment of enormous fines. How did the heart of Cromwell throb with fiery indignation, when deeds like these became the news of the day, and struck to silence the home-circle at Huntingdon, with emotions too vehement for utterance in words! It was not such bloody exhibitions of savage intolerance, however, that at length roused the nation to determined resistance. Prynne and others nobly suffered; giving therein such passive resistance as they could; but what may seem a very trifling matter in comparison with such despotic cruelty and intolerance, was destined to rouse the people of England against their oppressor. It has indeed been generally overlooked or purposely omitted to be noted by the historians of this period, that such barbarous mutilations were commonly adjudged in that age, and long afterwards, for comparatively trifling offences. The same continued in use throughout the Commonwealth. In the year 1652, for example, as we learn from "Nicoll's Diary," recently printed for the Bannatyne Club, an English soldier was so mutilated at the cross of

Edinburgh, by command of the English Commonwealth judges, *for drinking the king's health;* and in 1657, another soldier was still more severely dealt with, after having been scourged, and his ears nailed to the gallows for an hour, *for coining two half-crowns.** The historian is ever liable to the error of applying to other times the standard of his own. All times, however, prove alike in popular detestation of iniquitous or oppressive taxation. It was the refusal by one individual, a man of large possessions, to pay an illegal rate of only twenty shillings, which gave the signal of resistance to Charles's despotic sway. In the year 1634 came out the celebrated writ of ship-money. Several had already attempted to resist this illegal impost, and demanded, but in vain, to have the question tried before the King's Bench, when Cromwell's cousin, John Hampden, a gentleman of large fortune, and held in universal esteem for simplicity of manners, and a gentle and courteous affability, was assessed at the trifling sum of twenty shillings. He refused to pay it; resolving to bring to trial of law, and solemn judicial sentence, the great question of his country's rights involved in the cause. Hampden gained the point, in which others had failed, of having its legality tried. With calmness and moderation altogether consistent with his own gentle, though firm and manly character, his counsel conducted the cause through all the intricacies of legal ingenuity, during a trial which lasted for thirteen days; resting the whole question on the laws and established rights of England. Hampden was condemned by a majority of his judges; must pay the twenty shillings of ship-money; and while king and courtiers were rejoicing over their triumph, England was acquiring courage and union for resistance, in the conviction that justice was looked for in vain.

On the 12th of June, 1637, final judgment was given against Hampden, four judges dissenting. It was the

* Nicoll's Diary, (Bannatyne Club,) pp. 100, 194.

turning point in the history of England at that period; the close of peaceful endeavours for popular rights. Little more than a month thereafter, on Sunday the 23d of July, Laud's new service-book, which had been prepared with much labour expressly for the use of the Scottish Church, was at length produced in the Cathedral Church of St. Giles at Edinburgh. The church was crowded on this memorable occasion with the Lord Chancellor, the Lords of the Privy Council, the Judges, and Bishops, as well as a vast multitude of the people. Dr. Hanna, the new Dean of Edinburgh ascended the reading-desk, arrayed in surplice and all other canonical vestments, but no sooner did he commence the novel service, than a zealous dame who occupied her wonted place near the pulpit-stair, sprang up, and hurled the *cutty-stool* she sat upon at his head, indignantly exclaiming, "Out thou false thief, dost thou say mass at my lug!" Jenny Geddes, it has been well said, struck the initial stroke in the great civil war. The poor Bishop of Edinburgh, who sat in a neighbouring gallery, narrowly escaped with his life; and so general was this reception of Laud's service-book throughout Scotland, that the pelting of its abettors has been commemorated almost to our own day by the popular name conferred on that celebrated 23d of July, of *Stony Sunday!*

While the King and his advisers were thus bringing matters everywhere to a crisis, Oliver Cromwell was residing at Ely, whither he had removed on succeeding to the inheritance of his maternal uncle, Sir Thomas Steward, and there—while living, as he told his own parliament in 1654, neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity,—he watched, no uninterested spectator of the course of public events; ready to bear his part in the good cause when fit occasion arrived. In this very year, in which judgment had been given against his cousin, Hampden, and all England rang with the murmurings or

the threats it had awakened; and when bloody pillories at London, with fines and imprisonments, had attested the power and the inclination of the crown to crush its opponents; Oliver Cromwell stood forward to oppose another of its aggressions, and very effectually arrested a world of peculation and injustice going on in his own county under pretence of draining the famous *Bedford Level.* It was a perilous step; going in the very teeth of government schemes; but Oliver did it like all his other enterprises, very effectually, and acquired such popularity in the Fen country thereby, as to receive long after from friend and foe the name of "Lord of the Fens." It is about this time, or shortly afterwards, that in writing to his cousin, Mrs. St. John, the wife of Mr. St. John, celebrated for his pleadings in Hampden's cause,—for thus intimately was Cromwell related on all hands to the patriots of England,—he remarks, "Truly no poor creature hath more cause to put forth himself in the cause of his God than I. I have had plentiful wages beforehand; and I am sure I shall never earn the least mite. The Lord accept me in his Son, and give me to walk in the light, and give us to walk in the light, as he is in the light. He it is that enlighteneth our blackness, our darkness. I dare not say he hideth his face from me. He giveth me to see light in this light. One beam in a dark place hath exceeding much refreshment in it; blessed be his name for shining upon so dark a heart as mine. You know what my manner of life hath been. O, I have lived in, and loved darkness, and hated the light; I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true, I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me. O the riches of his mercy!"*

This language has afforded subject for the strangest comments by successive biographers. Dr. Russell discovers in it "the strong feeling of remorse," almost of

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 55.

despair. Forster—who reads it differently, and sees in it the language of hope and confidence,—thinks, nay, is sure, that "when Cromwell wrote that letter he was rather thinking of the parliament that must be summoned soon, and the place he was likely to succeed in standing for;" while less ingenious writers regard it only as indisputable evidence of his former dissolute life! Thousands of Christian readers, we doubt not, will recognise in it only the language of one who was "walking with God," and in the consciousness of his own weakness, feeling how needful and how refreshing are the daily supplies of grace and strength which the Christian receives.

The Scots meanwhile made no half-measures of their resistance to Laud's service-book and whole ecclesiastical system. A national league, in which all ranks united, was formed for the defence of religion. The King caused a royal edict to be proclaimed at the market-cross of Edinburgh, for the maintenance of the liturgy; whereupon a party of the chief nobles, deputed for the purpose, proclaimed on the same spot a solemn protest against the edict. The Covenant was renewed, and signed by enthusiastic multitudes, including the leading nobles of the kingdom. In less than six weeks the whole nation that had so recently welcomed Charles to his northern kingdom was confederated by solemn covenant to defy him; and when at length the indignant monarch summoned an English army, and proceeded northward to chastise them, the Scots met him with a much better army, officered by veterans trained under Gustavus Adolphus, and bearing on their banners the motto, "*For Christ's Crown and Covenant.*" There was nothing for it but submission both of Laud and Charles. An ungracious pacification was patched up, too insincere for long continuance, and both armies were disbanded with the certainty of speedily reassembling.

It was no longer possible that such men as Cromwell

should sit at home tending their farms and quarter-sessions, or at best opposing the court on some corruptly managed drainage-bill or like petty grievance. The trumpet had at length given no uncertain sound. Charles had laughed in scorn when he heard of the famous Edinburgh tumult, as the hasty furor of a despicable rabble: it proved no such ephemeral riot however. The King, driven from the field by the superior force of the insurgents, entered into negotiations with them, yielded to them at length all they desired, and, with his usual want of faith, sent down the Marquis of Hamilton with secret instructions to nullify his engagements by evasive clauses introduced into the Acts of Assembly. The discovery of this only strengthened the insurgents' hands. Argyle and others of the most powerful nobles, who till then had remained neutral, embraced the popular cause. Already provision was made for procuring arms and ammunition from the Continent, and a declaration was addressed to the English nation setting forth their just grievances, which, though regarded with contempt at court, found abundant sympathy with the people. The Puritans of England looked upon the cause of the Scots as their own. Secret correspondence was rapidly established between the two kingdoms, and the most despondent began to view the future with renewed hope.

CHAPTER V.

THE BISHOPS' WAR.

Thus passed the long interval of upwards of eleven years, during which Charles had tried to govern without parliament. Altogether blinded by his desire to chastise the presumption of his Scottish subjects, he

speedily resolved on a new course. Strafford, the only adviser of true genius and courage he possessed, was re. called from Ireland, where he had been holding the su preme power with firm but despotic sway. A declaration of the Scots, setting forth what they considered the terms of the treaty of Berwick, was burnt by the hands of the common hangman; and at length the King having intercepted a letter addressed by the Covenanters to the French court, he flattered himself that all England would sympathize with him in a war against such convicted traitors.

England was astonished at the summon of a parliament after all hope of legal reform had seemed at an end. Yet moderation on the whole influenced the people in the choice of their representatives, who, though opposed to the court, were chiefly men of worth and high standing, on whose temperate firmness the nation relied for the peaceable settlement of all differences. The elections took place in November, 1640, and Cromwell offered himself as a candidate for the representation of Cambridge. He met with strong opposition; Cleveland, the well-known poet, and at that time a tutor of St. John's College, engaged a powerful interest in his favour, but Cromwell was successful, and went up to London to take his place in the new parliament on the 13th of April, 1640. The King was full of indignation at the rebel Scots, and scarcely allowed himself to think that any thing else could occupy the attention of parliament. No sooner was it assembled, than he had their letter to the King of France laid before it, and demanded supplies for immediate war against the treasonable insurgents. To the King's surprise, however, the letter seemed to excite little notice. The Commons took up the old ground in which their strength has ever lain; redress of grievances must precede all vote of money. The King grew impatient and irritated. He sent a message to the house,

offering, if they would grant him twelve subsidies, payable in three years, that he would engage never to levy ship-money without consent of parliament. The demand was enormous, indeed as it seemed to them, more than all the wealth of the country could furnish; while the royal promise fell far short of what they desired in reference to that arbitrary impost. The Commons, however, were unwilling if possible, to quarrel with the King, and proceeded to vote that subsidies should be granted; leaving the amount for farther consideration, when Sir Harry Vane rose and intimated to them that, unless they were prepared to grant the whole of the King's demands, it was not worth while to deliberate, as he would not accept of less. The declaration was astounding—the most moderate were struck with consternation; and they had not had time to renew the subject, when they were hastily summoned to meet the King in the House of Lords, and this, which is known in history by the name of "*The Short Parliament*," was dissolved after a session of only three weeks. "An hour after the dissolution, Edward Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, met St. John, the friend of Hampden, and one of the leaders of the opposition, already formed into a party. Hyde was dispirited; St. John, on the contrary, though of a naturally sombre countenance, and who was never seen to smile, had now a joyous look and beaming eyes:—'What disturbs you?' said he to Hyde. 'That which disturbs many honest men,' answered Hyde, 'the so imprudent dissolution of so sensible and moderate a parliament, which, in our present disorders, was the only one likely to apply a remedy.' 'Ah, well,' said St. John, 'before things get better they must get still worse; this parliament would not have done what must be done.'"*

The poor King had hardly taken this rash step ere he repented of it. The very next day he consulted with the

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, p. 80.

most temperate of his advisers whether the dissolution could not be recalled. But it was too late. He had dismissed the last parliament from whom he could hope for generous concessions and moderate demands, and with characteristic haughtiness he returned to despotism for the accomplishment of his ends. Sir Thomas Wentworth, now Earl of Strafford, was the only man of real energy and genius among the King's advisers; but he occupied a falser position even than Charles himself. From a noisy, though hollow patriot, he had been won over to the court, and absolute despotism was his sole mode of overcoming every obstacle great or small. He had brought the Irish parliament to be obedient to his nod; subsidies and soldiers were voted to the King without opposition. He returned to England, and there his presence seemed to give new confidence and energy to the court. By means of forced loans, benevolencies, ship-money, monopolies, and every other method that the necessity of the moment and forgetfulness of the future could suggest, an army was got on foot to chastise the rebel Scots, who had so little appreciated the *good intentions* of Dr. Laud. Meanwhile, under Strafford's advice, the most arrogant and despotic measures were resorted to. Some of the most active members of the late parliament were imprisoned for their speeches; the houses of others were searched; and some Yorkshire gentlemen who had refused to comply with an arbitrary requisition of the court, were, by Strafford's advice, "laid up by the heels." The usual harshness of his counsels seemed to be aggravated by a severe illness, which brought him to the brink of the grave. Under his guidance the King seemed loosening every tie that bound him to his subjects, save that which despotism retains in the possession of superior power, and his retention of that was now about to be put to the test.

The newly-raised army of England had already assembled on the northern borders, and Strafford, though unable

from weakness to retain his seat on horseback, set out with the King to join the army, which he was to command. Difficult, however, as it had been to raise this army, it was a still more difficult task to command it. The soldiers had thoughts of their own on the matter in hand, of a very unpromising sort. They styled it the *Bishops' war*, and testified the feelings with which they regarded such a campaign by sacking the houses of such parish clergy as they passed, who had in any way made themselves notorious as followers of Laud's papistical extravagancies; while the parsonages of clergymen of Puritan tendencies were greeted with hearty cheers. Officers who attempted to interfere with such proceedings, and even some who were suspected of Popery, were shot by the soldiers. A very strangely affected army for a despotic throne to hold by, or with which to chastise Scottish Covenanters! The Scots, however, did not trust to the good-will of the English any more than to the good intentions of the King. Their opposition was no unpopular court scheme, requiring to be set afoot by forced loans, or arbitrary measures of any sort. The whole nation rose, as of old, when the beacon-fires warned them of southern invasion. Their wealthy merchants promptly furnished money and arms. Nobles and veterans officered the levies, Montrose himself at their head; and an air of resolute determination appeared in the very uniform of the army. A simple blue bonnet and suit of hodden-grey, with lowland plaid across his shoulder, and a bag of oatmeal trussed behind his back—pretty much as Froissart described him in the fourteenth century,—completed the accoutrements and baggage of the hardy Scot. Such men were not likely to yield their dearest rights without a determined struggle. On the 20th of August they crossed the Tweed at Coldstream, without waiting the arrival of their opponents, and pushed onwards to the Tyne, determined to fight their cause on English ground, and themselves present

their grievances to the King. Arrived at the Tyne, they found the English army mustered on its southern bank a few miles above Newcastle. Without hostile demonstration they asked leave to pass. A few shots were fired by the English outposts, answered by the roar of Scottish cannon. An action commenced, but the English soldiers had no stomach for the fight. Those banners they saw waving beyond the Tyne, or boldly forced across its fords, inscribed in legible characters, *for King and Covenant*, had more of their sympathy than the royal standard under which they fought; and Strafford only found himself obeyed when he headed their retreat to York, whither the Scots were following, "to present their grievances to the King's Majesty." The *Bishops' war* was already fought out. "From that moment," says M. Guizot,* "Strafford himself was conquered. In vain did he endeavour, now by good words, now by threats, to inspire the troops with other feelings; his advances to the officers were constrained, and ill concealed his contempt and anger; his rigour irritated the soldiers without intimidating them. Petitions from several counties soon arrived, entreating the King to conclude a peace. Lords Wharton and Howard ventured to present one themselves; Strafford caused them to be arrested, convoked a court-martial, and demanded that they should be shot at the head of the army, as abettors of revolt. The court remained silent; at length, Hamilton spoke: 'My lord,' said he to Strafford, 'when this sentence of yours is pronounced, are you sure of the soldiers?' Strafford, as if struck with a sudden revelation, turned away his head shudderingly, and made no reply. Yet his indomitable pride still upheld his hopes; 'Let the King but speak the word,' he wrote to Laud, 'and I will make the Scots go hence faster than they came; I would answer for it, on my life; but the instructions must come from another than me.'

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, p. 83.

In fact, Charles already avoided him, afraid of the energy of his counsels.

"This Prince had fallen into profound despondency; every day brought him some fresh proof of his weakness; money was wanting, and the old means of raising it no longer answered; the soldiers mutinied or deserted in whole bands; the people were everywhere in a state of excitement, impatient for the result which was now inevitable; the correspondence with the Scots was renewed around him, in his camp, in his very house. The latter, still prudent in their actions, humble in their speech, spared the counties they had invaded, loaded their prisoners with kindness and attention, and renewed at every opportunity their protestations of pacific views, of fidelity and devotion to the King, certain of victory, but anxious that it should be the victory of peace."

In fact the most of these Scottish invaders took up their abode in these northern counties they had overrun, tarried there about a year, and so far from being regarded as enemies, were welcomed for the most part as the saviours of the people.

The King and Strafford still struggled against necessity. A "Council of Peers," a feudal assembly, fallen into disuse for centuries, was summoned to assemble at York. But twelve of the most eminent peers demanded the convocation of parliament. A petition from the city of London seconded their demand, and refused all further loan of money without it.

The King was completely subdued. On the 3d of November, 1640, the new parliament, celebrated in history by the name of the *Long Parliament*, assembled at Westminster, and Oliver Cromwell once more sat in it as the representative of Cambridge. A strangely different spirit characterized it from that which had influenced the proceedings of the former parliament when it assembled. Many of the same men were there, but their temper was

no longer that of diffident fear, which received a favour instead of exacting concessions. They came with a consciousness of recovered power, and a resolute will to use it for their permanent emancipation from the aggressions of the crown. Conciliation was no longer thought of; tampering with grievances was at an end. Their former object had been to obtain their liberty as a concession from the King, their resolution now was to establish it for themselves. The parliament met on the 3d of the month. On the 11th they struck the decisive blow that proved at once their power and their determination to right the nation's wrongs; "with one stroke," says Milton, in exulting commendation of this famous assembly, "with one stroke winning again our lost liberties and charters, which our forefathers, after so many battles, could scarce maintain." The scenes of this eventful day are thus graphically pictured by Forster.* "The morning of the 11th of November, 1640, saw anxious crowds assembled in the neighbourhood of Westminster. A great business was a-foot. The members are now all within the House, and upon the crowd outside an anxious silence has fallen, such as anticipates great events. Hour passes after hour, yet the door of the Commons is still locked,—and within may be heard, by such as stand in the adjoining lobby, not the confused and wrangling noise of a various debate, but the single continuous sound of one ominous voice, interrupted at intervals, not by a broken cheer, but by a tremendous shout of universal sympathy. Suddenly a stir is seen outside, the crowd grows light with uncovered heads, and the carriage of the great Lord Lieutenant of Ireland dashes up to the House of Lords.

"Ten minutes more have passed—the door of the Commons House is abruptly thrown wide open—and forth issues Pym, followed by upwards of three hundred representatives of the English people; in that day the first

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i p. 64.

men of the world, in birth, in wealth, in talents. Their great leader crosses to the House of Lords, and the bar is in an instant filled with that immortal crowd.

"What, meanwhile, was the suspense lately endured by the meaner masses outside, to the agitation which now heaved them to and fro, like the sullen waves of an advancing storm. But the interval is happily shorter. It is closed by the appearance of Maxwell, the usher of the House of Lords, at whose side staggers Strafford himself, *a prisoner!* The storm which had threatened fell into a frightful stillness. They make 'through a world of staring people,' as old Baillie the covenanter wrote to his friends in Scotland, towards the carriage of the Earl, 'all gazing, no man capping to him before whom that morning the greatest of England would have stood discovered.' Statesmanship had achieved its master-stroke. The power of the greatest and proudest minister that ever ruled a nation—of the only minister of genius that Charles I. possessed—lay grovelling in the dust beneath the feet of the meanest person in that assembled populace."

In this master-stroke Oliver Cromwell was no indifferent spectator. He was already known among the foremost men of that parliament as a man of action rather than of words; one who could be relied on for striking a home-stroke if needs be, with little caring for precedents or the like troublesome punctilios. Before the first week of the parliament was over, his name had been placed on more than twenty committees, appointed to consider the most galling of the nation's grievances. He was already seen, among that determined band, to be one of those resolute spirits who make the precedents for guiding weaker men. Among the members of the new parliament was Sir Philip Warwick, a royalist of unusual fidelity to his own party, and of candour to his opponents. We owe to his lively pen by far the most graphic picture

of Cromwell at this period, that we now possess. "The first time I ever took notice of Cromwell," he writes,* "was in the beginning of the parliament held in November, 1640, when I vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman, for we courtiers valued ourselves much upon our good clothes. I came into the House one morning well clad, and perceived a gentleman speaking, whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor. His linen was plain, and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar: his hat was without a hatband. His stature was of a good size; his sword stuck close to his side; his countenance swoln and reddish: his voice sharp and untuneable; and his eloquence full of fervour—for the subject matter would not bear much of reason, it being in behalf of a servant of Mr. Prynne's, who had disperst libels against the queen for her dancing and such like innocent and courtly sports; and he aggravated the imprisonment of this man by the council-table unto that height, that one would have believed the very government itself had been in great danger by it. I sincerely profess it lessened much my reverence unto that great council, for he was very much hearkened unto. And yet I lived to see this very gentleman, whom, out of no ill-will to him, I thus describe, by multiplied good successes, and by real, but usurpt power, (having had a better tailor, and more converse among good company,) in my own eye, when for six weeks together I was a prisoner in his sergeant's hands, and daily waited at Whitehall, appear of a great and majestic deportment and comely presence. Of him, therefore, I will say no more, but that verily I believe he was extraordinarily designed for those extraordinary things which one while most wickedly and facinorously

* Warwick's Memoirs. Forster. vol. i. p. 66.

he acted, and at another so successfully and greatly performed." Such is the somewhat prejudiced sketch of an honest royalist, picturing to us the man who needed no *better tailor* to fit him for performing his great work.

"Pray, Mr. Hampden," said Lord Digby, another young member, who had that day for the first time, witnessed the same appearance as Sir Philip Warwick describes, and followed the patriot to inquire of him concerning his new ally, "pray, Mr. Hampden, who is that man—that sloven who spoke just now—for I see he is on our side, by his speaking so warmly?" Hampden answered, in ever memorable language—"That sloven whom you see before you, hath no ornament in his speech—that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the King, which God forbid! in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

Such men as Hampden already saw what was in the man, what power of genius lay beneath that rough exterior. His whole energies were bent on working out the people's rights—the nation's liberty. In the month of February following, we find him writing to a citizen of London, "I desire you to send me the reasons of the Scots to enforce their desire of uniformity in religion, expressed in their 8th article." This, therefore, we find, was matter of deep thought and purpose to him even thus early. Nevertheless, one can readily believe in the sincerity of his reply to Sir Philip Warwick, a little later, when that honest favourer of royalty had begun to see in him the spirit and true head of his party. Chancing unexpectedly to meet Cromwell one day when passing through the lobby of the House of Commons, Sir Philip stepped up to him, and with all the frankness of youthful zeal, demanded of Cromwell honestly to state what were the real objects his party aimed at. "I can tell you," answered Cromwell, without pausing to afford room for

farther questioning, "I can tell you what I would *not* have, if I cannot tell you what I *would*." It was, I doubt not, the honest expression of their opinions who then saw farthest into the future. They would not have any longer the continuance of a systematic despotism such as recently brought the kingdom to so terrible a crisis, and the people to [illegible] straits. They felt they had at length the power to will that such should no longer be; but how to secure the permanence of a better system for the future was only very dimly guessed at by the wisest. Forster, indeed, thinks that they early formed the idea of supplanting Charles, by his nephew Charles Louis, the elder brother of the more celebrated Prince Rupert. In this idea he had been anticipated by Bishop Warburton in his notes on Clarendon's History, but the evidence is at best vague and insubstantial. There is much better grounds for believing that Prynne, Hampden, Cromwell, and the best among the popular leaders, aimed at some such permanent security for the frequent meeting of free parliaments, as would have secured to the men of the seventeenth century the blessings we enjoy in the nineteenth century, under forms nearly as popular as the most licentious republic, but tempered by the mild influence of a limited monarchy, and held in check by the less excitable temperaments of an hereditary nobility. Such appears to be the scheme which Cromwell and the chief men of his party attempted to work out with more or less hope. A calm, strong-hearted, invincible man—no utopian dreams of a golden age, to be realized on some refined model of ancient republics, ever decoyed him from the contest with the actual facts surrounding him. He knew the virtues of Englishmen better, perhaps, than any leader of that age, and proved of what sterling stuff they consisted. But he knew, also, that they were men. The great mass of them just such fickle, selfish, narrow-visioned mortals as all multitudes

are made up of, and like a wise, far-seeing man, he legislated for them as such. From men like these, it may well be believed, Cromwell never looked for a reward of thanks or generous appreciation. History too well shows how justly he estimated the character of his people.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

THE impeachment of Strafford was a master-stroke of policy. Without it, indeed, the long parliament might have been even shorter lived than its predecessor. The Earl had, yielded only with great reluctance to show himself in parliament, knowing how deservedly he had incurred the odium of the people and of their leaders, among whom his career had begun with so very different promise. Encouraged, however, by necessity, and "the word of a king," he braved the storm, resolved to impeach his chief enemies in the House of Commons of having abetted the Scots in their invasion. His evidence was already prepared on that memorable 11th of November, when the Commons closed their doors, and only issued forth bearing their accusation to the assembled peers. During the discussion that preceded this decisive step, Lord Falkland had urged that some time should be allowed for examination of evidence. "The least delay," exclaimed Pym, "may loose everything; if the Earl talk but once with the King, parliament will be dissolved." The remark was decisive; parliament impeached him; sent him to the Tower,—to the block,—in defiance of "*the word of a king*," which soon came to be matter of little weight with most men. Strafford's impeachment was followed by that of Laud, a man not so much feared,

as detested for a fanatic bigotry that carried him through every act of despotic cruelty and intolerance with an untroubled conscience. Haughty and insolent, even to his equals, when in power, he yet seemed astonished that any one should harbour a feeling of dislike against him. He seems indeed to have had as lively a faith in his claim to canonization as the most bigoted of those who have made a martyr and saint of this English inquisitor.

The Commons now virtually took possession of the government, voted supplies, which they distributed without heeding the importunites of the King. Two other ministers of the crown, and several bishops, and judges, and theologians, were impeached. But this was devised only to get rid of their adversaries. Their proceedings were characterized by much moderation, when we consider the circumstances in which they stood. They voted the condemnation of Prynne, Burton, Bastwick, Leighton, and Lilburne, the victims of Laud's tender mercies; to have been illegal, and ordered their liberation and a large indemnity to be paid them. They now proceeded to secure by law the permanence of representative institutions. "A bill was proposed, Jan. 19, 1641, which prescribed the calling of a new parliament every three years at the most. If the King did not convoke one, twelve peers assembled at Westminster might summon one without his co-operation; in default of this, the sheriffs and municipal officers were to proceed with the elections. If the sheriffs neglected to see to it, the citizens had a right to assemble and elect representatives. No parliament could be dissolved or adjourned without the consent of the two Houses, till fifty days after its meeting; and to the Houses alone belonged the choice of their respective speakers. At the first news of this bill, the King quitted the silence in which he had shut himself up, and assembling both Houses at Whitehall, Jan. 23, said, 'I like to have frequent parliaments, as the best

means to preserve that right understanding between me and my subjects which I so earnestly desire. But to give power to sheriffs and constables, and I know not whom, to do my office, that I cannot yield to.' The House only saw in these words, a new motive to press forward the adoption of the bill; none dared counsel the King to refuse it; he yielded, but in doing so, thought it due to his dignity to show the extent of his displeasure. He said, 'I do not know for what you can ask, that I can hereafter make any question to yield unto you; so far, truly, I have had no great encouragement to oblige you, for you have gone on in that which concerns yourselves, and not those things which merely concern the strength of this kingdom. You have taken the government almost to pieces, and I may say, it is almost off its hinges. A skilful watchmaker, to make clean his watch, will take it asunder, and when it is put together again, it will go all the better, so that he leave not out one pin of it. Now, as I have done all on my part, you know what to do on yours.' Feb. 16, 1641.

"The Houses passed a vote of thanks to the King, and forthwith proceeded in the work of reform, demanding, in successive motions, the abolition of the Star Chamber, of the North Court, of the Ecclesiastical Court of High Commission, and of all the extraordinary tribunals."*

The two armies still lay in the northern counties, the Scots army maintained by parliament with regular pay, and provisions; the English forces meanwhile depending sometimes only on the exhausted exchequer, and not unfrequently getting rebellious for want of pay; for parliament had no such interest in keeping them together. Several of the bishops had already been impeached: the whole of them before very long were excluded altogether from parliament; an ominous premonition of the fate of the episcopal church in the hands of these reformers.

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, p. 93.

In 1641, Charles, after having signed the death-warrant of the only man of commanding genius and fidelity that served him, and for whose safety he had repeatedly pledged his royal word; and having signed the bill which deprived himself of the right of dissolving parliament without its own consent, resolved once more to visit his ancient kingdom of Scotland, not without hope that the people might prove more tractable than those to whom he had now willed away all but the name of king, without even the grace that accompanies a frank concession. In Charles indeed we see the difference between unreasoning obstinacy and true firmness. He refused to the last every concession that might have restored to him the good-will and faith of the nation; and yet allowed far more to be wrung from him whenever opposition assumed a determined front. The utmost anxiety was excited among the popular leaders by this northern journey, which they tried by various means to delay; while the King added to their jealousy by the disclosure of vague hopes, such as the man of infirm purpose ever anticipates in change. The royal visit to Edinburgh was destined to be of little avail. He offended his friends without conciliating his enemies; and the discovery that he had been secretly collecting evidence of the correspondence between the English Commons and the Scottish Covenanters, in order to bring about the destruction of the popular leaders, satisfied the latter that no faith could be reposed in the concessions of the people's rights already wrung from his unwilling grasp.

Such was the prevailing agitation and distrust, when news reached London, in November 1641, that the Irish, acting on a commission, which they professed to have received from the king, were ravaging the whole country with fire and sword, and committing the most horrible cruelties on all who professed the Protestant religion, or adhered to the cause of the English popular leaders. A

grand petition and remonstrance, was immediately resolved on, setting forth the country's grievances and the King's aggressions. It was debated by the Commons on Monday 22d November, and only decided long after midnight by a majority of eleven votes. Cromwell sat listening to that long debate, the longest then known, with earnest emotions. Clarendon tell us that Cromwell had so far mistaken the feeling of the House, that he scarcely anticipated opposition. Conversing with Lord Falkland, says the royalist historian, he told him that day would speedily determine it, for they would have at the worst, but a very sorry debate.

The stormy scene that did occur on that occasion is thus vividly described by Sir Philip Warwick:—"At three of the clock in the morning, when they voted it, I thought we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death; for we, like Joab's and Abner's young men, had catched at each other's locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it, and led us to defer our angry debate until the next morning."—Clarendon relates, "that as the members at that late hour were hurrying out of the House, the Lord Falkland asked Oliver Cromwell whether there had been a debate? To which he answered, he would take his word another time; and whispered him in the ear, with some asseveration, that if the remonstrance had been rejected, *he would have sold all he had the next morning, and never have seen England more;* and he knew there were many other honest men of the same resolution. So near," adds the royalist historian, "was the poor kingdom at that time to its deliverance."

We may reasonably question, however, the correctness of the latter report, resting as it does only on the authority of Clarendon. Cromwell was not the man to desert the cause in which he had advanced so far, because of

one defeat; his steadfast self-reliance anticipated no such easy road to the distant goal.

The remonstrance was passed on the 22d, and the King returned from Scotland on the 25th of November, haughty and confident as ever. The people had hailed with noisy shouts the royal cavalcade on its progress from Scotland; the city of London had feasted him, and the citizens escorted him back to Whitehall with vociferous demonstrations of welcome. The King flattered himself all was righting again, unconcious that the leaders of the Commons were informed of all his tampering with Scottish malecontents, his abortive army plots, collections of evidence, and the like tokens of bad faith; and above all, that they possessed the power which such discoveries urged them the more to strengthen and exercise in their own defence.

Differences daily became wider; and interests more and more antagonist. Cavalier and Roundhead became the two parties in the kingdom in whose grand distinctions all minor differences were absorbed. The poor King meanwhile learned by no experience. "The divinity that doth hedge a king," was ever in his thoughts, and no lesson could teach him how rapidly it was vanishing from most other minds, mainly by his own obstinate abuse of it. As matters ever tended more to extremities the King only became the more confident. He collected the evidence which had cost him so much trouble to obtain, and resolved to turn it to account without farther delay. Five of the chief leaders of the Commons, Pym, Hampden, Haselrig, Holles, and Strode, were accused of high treason, and the King came in person at the head of nearly four hundred men, to arrest the accused. The members had received timely warning, and withdrawn. The King was received with cries of "Privilege! Privilege!" He was defeated by the very scheme he had promised himself should prove the restoration of his power. Within a week after he hastily quitted his palace

of Whitehall, never to re-enter it but on his way to the scaffold. War had become inevitable; and though some show of consultation and attempt at co-operation was still kept up between king and parliament, each was wending on its different course, preparatory to collision, and settlement by force. Long after all thought of compromise was abandoned messages were constantly passing between king and parliament; appeals by the Commons to the King, as constitutional father, against Charles as the abuser of kingly power; appeals by the King against encroachments on prerogative, divine right, and other claims of royalty; "law pleadings of both parties before the great tribunal of the English nation, each party striving to prove itself right, and within the verge of law." A strange feature, indeed, throughout the whole revolution, is this ever-present reverence for law. Law with Englishmen of the seventeenth century meant order, and definite recognition of all mutual obligations. The King called for protection to the *rights* of the crown, and was reminded, that if the crown had rights, it had duties also, duties which consisted in faithfully administering the rights of the people. The whole English Revolution, resolved itself at length into a practical protest against the illegality of absolute power.

CHAPTER VII.

CIVIL WAR.

OLIVER CROMWELL was forty-two years of age when the great civil war commenced, and physical force became for a time sole effectual argument among Englishmen. This man so long pictured to us as the slave of ambition; in whose diseased mind dreams of power, and visions of crowns and royal honours, haunted even the happy period

of boyhood, and had to be exorcised by the scourge of the pedagogue, is found to have passed the greater part of vigorous youth and manhood amid the homely duties of his own farm or country-side. When we find him first rising in the House of Commons to give voice to his indignation at the encroachments of Popery, it is from Huntingdon he has received the London news; from his old teacher, Dr. Beard. When we see him, with his own wonted courage stepping in between the crown and its peculations and extortions—regardless of the warnings that bloody pillories, fines, and imprisonments, have so recently given to all who are prepared for less than blind and passive obedience,—it is still within his own sphere, in the Fen-country, and among his own neighbours and friends, that the bold stroke is achieved. A man of gravity and reserve, not readily involving himself in matters out of his own fair field of action; but all the more one whose co-operation was invaluable where decision and promptness of action were required; "an active person," as Hampden had long ago said, when he took up the vexatious fen-drainage question, "and one that would hit well at the mark." A most clear-sighted man, however, Oliver Cromwell proves himself to be, whom no formulas, or mere law-logic difficulties impede for a moment. On committees of the House of Commons, in private consultations among its leaders, in public speech even, when needs be, though that as seldom as possible; by all possible means of moral suasion, he strove from the first day of the long parliament assembling, until by the fatalest of all steps—the attempt to seize the five members—the King announced to the world that moral suasion was at end. This done, all doubt with him ceased, and he drew his sword with the same composed sense of duty with which the physician turns to severer remedies, when all milder appliances have failed. A striking contrast, if we compare him with the best men of his age,

Earl Manchester for example, general of the people's army—slow to make up his mind—ever hoping for some fortunate chance of reconciliation and return to loyal obedience—looking forward to victory as scarcely less dreadful than defeat—no coward, but a man beset with formulas—in whose mind notions of a divine right of kingship were ever rising up like rank weeds, among the pasture, the tallest in the field. Or again, poor Lord Falkland, the gentle, noble-minded scholar, to whom the learned men of Oxford resorted *as to a college situated in a purer air*—all his sympathies with the popular cause, and yet constrained by chivalrous notions of loyalty to stand blindly by the King—he could never break through these besetting formulas, and cheerfully welcomed death at the first fight of Newbury, as the best solver of all difficulties. It was a feeling with thousands, unnerving the bravest of them. "I would not continue here an hour," wrote Lord Robert Spencer from the royal camp to his wife, "if there could be an expedient found for solving the punctilio of honour." So powerful was a name to scare men into fighting against their own rights.

It is well worthy of note, this clear-sightedness of Cromwell. It reveals the innate strength and vigour of his understanding, which found no difficulty in reconciling his opposition to the King, even to the death, with the maintenance of untarnished loyalty, when that king despised and set at nought every principle of law, justice, or good-faith. His loyalty he felt was not due to the man Charles, but to the mutual relationship of king and people, which parliament was then seeking to restore, not to destroy. "Civil war," says Forster,* "became inevitable, and it is characteristic of Cromwell that he was the first man absolutely in the field. Acting under no regular commission, he performed some pieces of daring and important service in his native districts. When the later declara-

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 84.

tion by the King, respecting the question of the militia had left no doubt of the speedy unfurling of the royal standard, he suddenly left London for the old vicinity of Huntingdon, whither a supply of arms, sent at his own private charge, had preceded him, and where a large body of dauntless men awaited him, inspired to the coming conflict by no mercenary or mean motives, but by the great old lessons they had learned under the farmer of Ely and St. Ives. His striking determination, too, at this period to venture every thing on the result of the contest, is further shown by his having recklessly devoted large sums out of his dwindled private patrimony to the promotion of public designs. He had given L.500 to the fund raised by parliament for assistance to crush the Irish rebellion —he had purchased the weapons elsewhere named—and when, some few months later, a difficulty arose respecting some hired waggons provided to put Lord Manchester's army in motion against the King, he at once got rid of the difficulty by paying out of his own purse L.100 for the hire.

"Having arrived and picked out his men—a solid foundation for his famous regiment of Ironsides—he appears at once to have bent his chief exertions to the organization of some system among the chief popular men of the district, whereby they might have the inhabitants immediately trained to military service, the eastern counties associated for mutual defence, and the movements of the royalists watched with unsparing vigilance. In the Commons' Journals of a very little later date, an order is observed, that 'Mr. Cromwell do move the lord lieutenant for the county of Cambridge, to grant his deputation to some of the inhabitants of the town of Cambridge, to train and exercise the inhabitants of that town.'

"And a more obvious piece of daring service—more important it could not be—while the royal standard still remained unfurled, commemorated Cromwell's resolved

zeal. Taking along with him his brother-in-law Valentine Wauton, (member for the county of Huntingdon,) he succeeded in stopping the plate of the university of Cambridge, a spoil of inestimable value, which was then on the point of being sent to the King, to be melted down for the purposes of the war. We find, from the Journals, that, on the 15th of August, 1642, Sir Philip Stapelton gave an account in the Lower House, from the committee for the defence of the kingdom, that 'Mr. Cromwell, in Cambridgeshire, had seized the magazine in the castle of Cambridge; and had hindered the carrying of the plate from that university.'"

The most prejudiced of Cromwell's enemies have been compelled to acknowledge the striking exhibition of the domestic affections which his life affords, and this is most amply borne out by his collected letters. Nevertheless he quits for the unwonted service of arms, the wife whom he loved most tenderly, and his good old mother, still living; and carries with him his two sons, Oliver and Richard, the eldest scarcely twenty, to venture their lives in the cause of liberty—to venture, and to lose also. So little does Cromwell say of himself that we can only confusedly guess at the probable period—very early in these wars—when the boy Oliver fell; though it went to his father's heart—*indeed it did.*

The King meanwhile, it may be guessed, was not idle. The royal jewels were already sent to Holland, to return in the shape of arms and amunition; silver and gold plate were begged and borrowed; contributed by the university of Oxford; attempted to be contributed, as we have seen, by the university of Cambridge. An army was getting together by all possible means of favour or force; nor was parliament a bit behind royalty in its exertions. London too had its plate to contribute, and sent horses to boot, and volunteers so heartily that four thousand enlisted in a single day—all in aid of the parliament and the

cause of liberty. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed. Even the women vied with one another in their efforts in the popular cause. Every kind of plate, even to their silver-thimbles, poured into the treasury. The city contributed L.100,000 by way of loan. The members of both Houses opened a subscription. Cromwell gave his first instalment of L.300—no trifling sum for him. Hampden, from his larger resources, contributed L.1000. The trial was to be every way worthy of the cause at stake.

At length the King took the field. On the 23d of August he summoned his subjects to arms by erecting the royal standard at Nottingham. With all the formality of a legal procedure, the King attended with a body of eight hundred horse and a company of militia. The trumpets sounded, the standard was brought forward, and after much discussion as to the precise form established by precedent, it was planted on a tower of Nottingham Castle, in imitation of the example of Richard III. But, as an ominous foreboding of the fate of the royal cause, a tempestuous wind blew it down before morning; and the King waited in vain at Nottingham, in fruitless expectation of the people's answer to his appeal.

The Earl of Essex had already been at the head of the parliamentary forces for more than a week. Arrived at Northampton, he found an army of nearly twenty thousand men awaiting his orders. But still forms of constitutional law seemed as indispensible to the parliament, as precedents to the King. The instructions to Essex were, after earnestly petitioning the King to return to London, "by battle or otherwise to rescue his majesty, and his two sons, from their perfidious councillors, and bring them back to the parliament." His title indeed was "General for King and Parliament;" his duty, as Carlyle has it: "To deliver the poor beloved King from traitors, who have misled him, and clouded his fine understanding, and rendered him, as it were, a beloved parent fallen *insane!*"

There is something perhaps amusing, yet withal very significant, in this ever-present reverence for law. It is part of the quiet solid characteristics of the English nation; and presents to us a very notable contrast, when placed alongside of the irreverent lawlessness of the first French Revolution. We owe to this all the liberty that has sprung from the second revolution of 1688, which certainly received few indeed of its features of value from the feeble actors in that exchange of kings.

Matters moved very slowly at first towards any definite decision. Essex rather followed than faced the royal army, already numbering above twelve thousand men, with Prince Rupert at the head of the cavalry; a man of daring courage, but rash and headstrong, and who speedily brought the royal cause into discredit by his pillaging and violence. It was not till Essex found that the King was marching on London, and the parliament and capital were in dismay, that he took any decisive steps to oppose the enemy. On the 23d of October, 1642, the two armies met near Keynton, in Warwickshire, both eager for battle. After a hard day's fight both claimed the victory; but Essex had accomplished his purpose, and London had no longer to fear the march of the royal troops. Captain Cromwell was present in this engagement; did what in him lay to render it a more decisive one than it proved; and when that failed, drew from it some very memorable and important conclusions, best told in his own words, addressed by him long after to one of his own parliaments. "I was," said he, "a person that from my first employment was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater, from my first being a captain of a troop of horse, and I did labour (as well as I could) to discharge my trust, and God blessed me as it pleased him, and I did truly and plainly, and then in a way of foolish simplicity (as it was judged by very great and wise men, and good

men too) desire to make my instruments to help me in this work; and I will deal plainly with you. I had a very worthy friend then, and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory was very grateful to all, Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement I saw their men were beaten at every hand; I did indeed, and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army of some new regiments, and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work. This is very true that I tell you, God knows I lie not; 'Your troops, said I, are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows, and, said I, their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality; do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will be ever able to encounter gentlemen, that have honour and courage, and resolution in them?'—Truly, I presented him in this manner conscientiously, and truly I did tell him, you must get men of a spirit. And take it not ill what I say, (I know you will not,) of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will be beaten still; I told him so, I did truly. He was a wise and worthy person, and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one; truly I told him I could do somewhat in it; I did so; and truly I must needs say that to you, (impart it to what you please,) I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, and made some conscience of what they did, and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually."

One gains here, if he will only look fairly to it, a very clear insight both into the shrewd penetration and the genuine faith of this man. Cromwell saw at a glance that this chivalric honour that kept so many men of genuine

worth and bravery bound to the cause of royalty, was no empty shadow, but a principle pregnant with the most formidable opposition to the popular cause. They never would get on with a set of decayed serving-men, tapsters, and the like base fellows, fighting against men of honour. They must match loyalty with a higher principle, if such can be found. To face men of honour, says Cromwell, they must have men of religion; and well he proved the soundness of his advice. He set himself forthwith to organize his immortal troop of Ironsides. Fourteen squadrons of English yeomen were raised through time, every man of them with his heart in the work, and contending for the realization of principles to them most sacred and noble. Here was a loyalty that could match the delusive chivalry of "*punctilios of honour.*" With Cromwell at their head, they bade defiance to all opponents. From that moment the destinies of England were changed. They never knew defeat. But this was not the only good service for which Cromwell appeared to be the sole able man in all England. Royalist high-sheriffs and justices were presently forward enough in all counties, seizing on malecontents; arresting horses, arms, plate, &c.; levying forced loans; and by all zealous means, sorely afflicting every Puritan corner of the land. To these there soon followed royalist enlistment and foraging parties, headed by Prince Rupert, and his plunderers, till the most peaceable rose in self-defence; and county associations were formed all over England for opposing them. Cromwell set himself very effectually to organize the "Eastern Association," as it was called, including the whole Fen-country and its neighbourhood. Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge, and Herts, were all bound together in this defensive league; and while the other associations dropped to pieces, one after another, for lack of some master-spirit to keep them together, this one maintained itself during the whole war, doing good service to the popular cause,

and reaping ample reward; by the very terror of its name scaring war and invasion from its borders, while nearly every other district of England was alternately pillaged and overrun. Cromwell, indeed, never missed an opportunity of advancing the parliamentary cause, or checking its opponents.

To this period belongs the oft-told domiciliary visit of Captain Cromwell to his cavalier uncle and god-father, once Knight of Hinchinbrook. The sumptuous entertainer of royalty in its former *progresses* through Huntingdonshire was now sadly reduced, and compelled to shelter, with wofully tarnished magnificence, at some poor jointure house near Ramsey Mere, which had happily been saved when all else of his princely fortunes went to wreck. Thither came the parliamentary captain, with his new levies, and searched for arms, ammunition, and everything that seemed to promise supplies for the King, in his new course of open warfare. While Oliver's dragoons made rigorous search, Oliver himself, say the old biographers, respectfully conversed with his uncle, refusing even to remain covered in his presence—a thing credible enough of Oliver Cromwell, who was just the man we might expect to exercise his duty to parliament without fear or favour, and yet in all reconcileable ways not to forget what might be due to his uncle. Hypocrisy, however, and revenge for punishments inflicted of old on the wayward boy, form the more popular explanation of the scene. That revenge, at least, had nothing to do with it, is proved by the shelter Cromwell afterwards afforded to his kinsman when he had the power; of the hypocrisy the reader can judge: meanwhile let him see another example of Cromwell's activity. The high-sheriff of Herts, a zealous royalist, and bent on doing good service to his master, rode into St. Albans, the first stage north of London, surrounded with an armed retinue, and on the market-day read aloud the King's writ, proclaiming the Earl of Essex and all who followed

him traitors, and commanding all Englishmen to arm in the King's behalf,—a bold and well-devised measure, not unlikely in skilful hands considerably to augment the royal army, and cripple the parliament with an opposition so near their own head quarters. The bumpkins of Hertfordshire were listening with open-mouthed wonder to the high-sheriff's appeal for loyal aid against traitors, when suddenly Cromwell's dragoons dash into the market-place, seize on the high-sheriff, and carry him off, not without difficulty, and against considerable odds—a piece of service recorded in the journals of the day as one of the best that had been done for a long time. This was the more apparent, as there were also taken at the same time a large store of ammunition, a number of excellent saddles, and a quantity of pistols, powder, shot, and other warlike supplies provided for a great force, which were thus carried off to be employed against the very party at whose cost they had been provided. The high-sheriff lay in the Tower for some years, doing no farther service or disservice, and Hertfordshire was in no hurry to array itself for defence of royalty. Cromwell appears, by the glimpses we can catch of him in letters, journals, and chance allusions of various kinds, to have been riding about with celerity, and the most consummate tact, doing like services wherever opportunity offered; now forwarding some object of the parliament, now checking, or altogether overturning, some hopeful scheme of the enemy, and all this without waiting for orders from the somewhat phlegmatic Essex, whose elephantine gravity of procedure but little accorded with such guerilla practice. For the last piece of service, Cromwell received his colonel's commission, and augmented the number of his followers in the way we have already indicated. We see, indeed, that while only the captain of a troop, he was the life and soul of the parliamentary army, a man ever ready to step out of the beaten path, and make precedents wherein weaker men could follow.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

THE first decided engagement between Charles and his subjects has already been described. Friend had met friend, and brother stood opposed to brother in the conflict. One of the most terrible events that can befall a nation was now developing itself; and its course inevitable. Arguments of reason, and all efforts at moral suasion were now thrown aside; and sword to sword, the great question of England's liberties was to be tried. In every decisive movement that hastened on the determination of the great question at issue Cromwell is found foremost. With his clear-sighted sagacity he saw no good that could be anticipated from temporizing, after the sword had been appealed to as final umpire; and, like the surgeon who has given up all hope of milder cure, he applied the amputating knife as the swiftest and only satisfactory remedy for the diseased limb.

At the head of twelve troops of his invincible cavalry Cromwell entered Lincolnshire, in defiance of a strong royalist, and a strong local interest, opposed to him, strengthened by many old Roman Catholic families, all of whom declared for Charles. Cromwell speedily altered the aspect of affairs. Sweeping through the country, he everywhere disarmed the disaffected, took Stamford and Burleigh House, and, as Mrs. Hutchinson writes, "he alone, by his diligence, prevented the designs of the royal party." On the 13th of May, 1643, he writes from Grantham, "God hath given us this evening a glorious victory over our enemies." Approaching the town of Grantham towards sunset, with his harassed troops anticipating rest and refreshment so soon as they should

reach it, Cromwell was suddenly alarmed by the appearance of a large body of cavalry, more than double the number of his men, bearing rapidly down upon him. They were under the command of General Cavendish, a young royalist anxious to achieve renown, and who had levied a large force to accomplish the recovery of Lincolnshire for the King. Though checked by the superior numbers of the enemy Cromwell stood his ground, and presented so determined a front to them, that young Cavendish was fain to call a halt, and content himself with skirmishing with the advanced line. This continued with firing on both sides for about half an hour, till Cromwell, watching his opportunity, and, as he characteristically writes, "they not advancing towards us, we agreed to charge them;" and did execute the charge so effectually, that the flying enemy were completely routed, and pursued with severe slaughter for several miles. Officers were taken prisoners, colours seized, and Lincolnshire for the present very effectually freed from all royalist demonstrations. General Cavendish contrived to escape from this dreadful route; some comfort to the discomfited royalists, who still anticipated deeds of daring and better fortune from his generalship. The reader, indeed, sometimes will smile, and oftener sigh, over the blighted hopes and promises of such great eras. Sir William Waller, "that valiant soldier and patriot of his country," is now "the observed of all observers," the expected people's leader. Colonel Hampden too, a patriot known by good service done with other weapons than the sword, and, notwithstanding his gentle courtesy, already approved as a brave soldier in the field, is being named by many as destined to supersede the Lord General Essex, the expected protector of the commonwealth. Cromwell, meanwhile, makes himself heard from time to time by such achievements as we have related. Soon after the route of General Cavendish and his troops, he

received a reinforcement of about three hundred horse, and with these advanced straight on Gainsborough, which, though garrisoned by parliament soldiers, was exposed to the main body of the royalist forces. Cromwell threw himself and his regiment between the town and the first division of the enemy, regardless of their great superiority in point of numbers, maintained the position for a time, and at length seizing a favourable opportunity, he charged them with such effect that they were completely routed, and pursued with great slaughter for nearly six miles. Returning, he attacked the reserve of the enemy, headed by young General Cavendish,—the last service he was to attempt for royalty. The reserve experienced the same fate as the first division of the royalist force, they were totally routed, driven pell-mell into a bog, and most of them, including poor Cavendish himself, left dead on the field,—a loss loudly bewailed by the adherents of Charles. "Colonel Cromwell," says Whitelock, "performed very gallant service against the Earl of Newcastle's forces. This was the beginning of his great fortunes, and now he began to appear in the world." Forster remarks that this achievement was also the beginning of his lasting intimacy with the celebrated Ireton. "This famous man," says he,* "was at the time a captain in 'Col. Thornhaugh's regiment;' but, hearing of Cromwell's brave intentions in this matter, solicited leave to join him in the enterprise, and a lasting bond of friendship was thereafter sealed betwixt them. Cromwell had perhaps the most surprising faculty in selecting his friends or agents of any man that ever played a great part in the world; and it might possibly be taken as in some sort an evidence of the purity of his present motives that he now selected Ireton. Eleven years the junior of Cromwell, this gallant and virtuous man had been bred to the bar, and had distinguished himself thus early by the projection

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 103.

of various legal and constitutional reforms of a very striking and philosophical character. His opinions, however, were all republican, and his integrity so stern and uncompromising, that no worldly motives or advantages ever changed or modified those convictions of his mind. Nor did military services ever transport him out of philosophical or meditative habits, since he was able with amazing facility, as Hume has, with a misplaced sneer, observed, 'to graft the soldier on the lawyer, the statesman on the saint.' Three years after the relief of Gainsborough, this excellent person married Cromwell's eldest daughter, Bridget, then in her twenty-first year—having, instantly upon the former action, Mrs. Huchinson tells us, 'quite left Colonel Thornhaugh's regiment' to join that of the greater colonel whose conduct and genius had 'charmed him.' "

To understand, however, the true value of Cromwell's services, it must be borne in mind that in nearly every other quarter the parliamentary cause had met with reverses, losses, and the most untoward events. Hampden, the hope of the party, was in his grave. He had returned mortally wounded from the field of battle to die near to his birth-place; while a sorrowing nation named him the Father of his country. Defections had appeared among their adherents—in some places indeed all discipline seemed vanishing from their troops. Even after relieving Gainsborough, Cromwell's skilful generalship had to be displayed in a masterly retreat before the overwhelming forces of the royalist army; while in the west the King's forces were triumphing almost unchecked. The parliament had lost Bristol, a place of great importance to them; had indeed almost lost the Earl of Essex's army, through imbecility, discouragement, and desertions. The King seemed to have it all his own way; and the parliament, driven to extremity, were again turning to the Scots for aid, and arranging with them the Solemn League and

Covenant; a very earnest engagement; and the condition on which alone they could get Scottish aid. On the 22d of September, 1643, the House of Commons and the celebrated Assembly of Divines, ratified this Covenant in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster; Oliver Cromwell heartily affixing his signature thereto. It was a national vow, the meaning of which was very strongly present to the minds of thousands then; though seemingly now grown incomprehensible to most. One very noticeable effect of it, was the immediate summoning of a Scottish army to their aid—"all fencible men from sixteen to sixty," to go up to the help of their English brethren.

Meanwhile Cromwell is daily rising in estimation. The Eastern Association remains in activity, and doing good service, while all others are fast falling to pieces; and at the very time that he is doing such gallant deeds at Gainsborough, he is appointed by the Commons governor of the Isle of Ely; a place of great military capabilities, but now exposed to danger on various accounts, and much needing some such thorough-going governor to put its affairs in order.

The Earl of Manchester now came forward to accept the command of the Eastern Association, and received authority to raise new forces, infantry and cavalry; and Cromwell had an additional force of 2000 men placed under his command. At this time Sir John Henderson, a brave and veteran officer, left by the Earl of Newcastle in command in Lincolnshire, was burning for an opportunity of avenging on Cromwell the repeated disastrous checks the royalist forces had suffered there at his hands. "The opportunity occurred on the 12th of October, 1643, when, by a capital manœuvre, Henderson came up with Fairfax, Cromwell, and their cavalry, at Waisby field, near Horncastle, while Manchester was yet with his infantry a long day's march in the rear,—and threatened destruction to them with a force almost thrice as nu-

merous as their own. Cromwell paused for a moment—drew up his men—and resolved to give battle. 'Come,' said the gallant Fairfax with inspiration scarcely second to his own, 'let us fall on! I never prospered better than when I fought against the enemy three or four to one.'

"Then was seen the secret of Cromwell's extraordinary influence over his determined Ironsides. In an instant he circulated through their ranks the watch-word—TRUTH and PEACE—gave out a psalm which the officers and men at once, as the Greek soldiers took up their song of freedom, uplifted with united voices, and then rushed, on Cromwell's word to charge in the name of the MOST HIGH, on the astonished enemy. A volley struck them in mid-charge, but did little execution—they clapped spurs to their horses with more furious zeal, and receiving another volley as they fell upon the advancing royalist column, it struck down the horse of Cromwell. His rider was in frightful danger for a while, and as he rose from the ground was again struck down by the hand (as it was thought) of Sir Ingram Hopton. For some moments he lay unconscious among the slain. Again recovering, he seized a 'sorry horse' from one of his troopers, and joined the hand to hand *melee* with terrible fierceness. The royalists, broken, astonished, and dismayed, had never recovered the first shock. They now gave way in all directions, and did not stop their flight, till, after suffering terrible slaughter, they had reached the gate of Lincoln.

"This engagement had a striking effect. It closed the disastrous campaign of 1643 with a gleam of brightest hope for the parliamentary cause. It so startled Charles that he is reported to have exclaimed to his friends, 'I would that some would do me the good fortune to bring Cromwell to me, alive or dead!' It moved Newcastle from his position, for, as soon as he heard of it, having also, just before, suffered from a gallant sortie out of Hull, con-

ducted by Fairfax's father, he raised the siege and disposed his forces into winter quarters.

"Not so Cromwell and Manchester. They had yet some work to do. Castles and fortified towns were taken by them, money raised, royalists kept in check, garrisons strengthened, and the entire borders of the Eastern Association placed in a state of security. Not till all this had been completely done, and the increasing severity of the weather left no opportunity for such exertions farther, were their forces disposed for the winter."*

While Cromwell was co-operating with the Earl of Manchester, and the Westminster Divines, in visiting and reforming the colleges of Cambridge, and the cathedrals of Peterborough and Ely, and appointing new heads of colleges,—which the most prejudiced are compelled to acknowledge were men of learning and virtue, and unquestionable literary eminence,—the great levy was proceeding in Scotland with unmistakeable zeal. On the 19th of January, 1644, the Scots entered England by Berwick, marching knee-deep in snow. They numbered 21,000 men, and were headed by the veteran Lesley, now Earl of Leven. The royalists were effectually checked, and taken in the rear. Newcastle's army, strongly reinforced by Irish levies to the great indignation of the Protestant and Puritan party, was compelled to fall back. The main divisions of the parliamentary army, inspirited by such hearty forwardness in these allies, pushed their advantages on every hand. Manchester and Cromwell—now lieutenant-general—moved northward to co-operate with the Scots. The other divisions, under Essex, Waller, and Fairfax, vigorously emulated their example, in spite of the inclement season; and soon the whole prospects of the parliamentary cause began to assume a new aspect. Charles had made truce with the rebels of Ireland, and thousands of them joined the royal standard;

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 121.

but their religion as Papists, and the bloody massacres they had perpetrated on the Protestants of Ireland; did more to discredit the cause they were serving, than any addition in point of numbers could compensate for. They carried their savage manners with them, and helped, with Prince Rupert and his dragoons, to make the cause of Charles detestable to every county through which they passed. Against such allies, the parliament were fortunate in being able to oppose 21,000 Covenanters; every man of them *with a spirit in him*, such as Cromwell longed for when he saw the base spirit of the first raw levies of "decayed serving-men and tapsters," and felt how poor a match they were for the cavaliers of Charles, with their high notions of honour and chivalrous loyalty.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VICTORY OF MARSTON MOOR.

THE campaigns of the year 1643 are memorable in the history of England as a protracted and doubtful strife in which hope and fear alternated in every breast, and the triumph of freedom or of despotism seemed set as it were on the hazard of a die. How much of its final decision can be assigned to the persevering hardihood and daring of Cromwell, it may be difficult even now to say; but there can be no question that he was the first to break through the prejudices induced by the ancient monarchial forms of government, the perversion of which for every purpose of illegal oppression and injustice had so effectually induced that state of commotion and strife, which he strove by swiftest means to bring to a close. The instructions he gave his men in reference to the King's person are singularly characteristic of his clear-sighted

and straightforward mode of pursuing his object. "In leading forth his warriors into the field," says Forster,* "Oliver Cromwell gave them their last instruction in a piece of fiery sincerity which, better than the *cold hypocrisy* he had equally at command, availed him for his present purposes." We hope, however, that the reader has already formed a juster estimate of this great man than to look upon him as a hypocrite, only choosing sincerity when it served for the accomplishment of his ambitious aims. "He told them that he would not seek to perplex *them* (since other officers he had heard instructed their troops in the nice legal fictions of their civil superiors in parliament) with any such phrases as fighting for *king and parliament;* it was for the parliament alone they were now marching into military service; for himself he declared that if he met King Charles in the body of the enemy, he would as soon discharge his pistol upon him as upon any private man; and for any soldier present, therefore, who was troubled with a conscience that might not let him do the like, he advised him to quit the service he was engaged in. A terrible shout of determined zeal announced no deserter on that score, and on marched Cromwell and his Ironsides,—then the seed, and soon after the flower, of that astonishing army, which even Lord Clarendon could describe as one to which victory was entailed, and which, humanly speaking, could hardly fail of conquest whithersoever led,—an army whose order and discipline, whose sobriety and manners, whose courage and success, made it famous and terrible all over the world."

The proceedings by which both parties prepared for the tremendous campaign of 1644 now began in right earnest. A new manœuvre struck the mind of Charles's adherents, by which they hoped to outwit the parliament, and win back to their cause the popular favour. This was none

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 93.

other than to oppose to it a rival parliament, by assembling at Oxford all those members of both Houses who had withdrawn from Westminster. The proposal did not greatly please Charles. The very name of parliament had become distasteful to him; and it did not very greatly lessen his dislike to the necessity of listening to their councils, to know that this one would consist entirely of men already pledged to the royal cause. The Queen was still more averse to it; rightly apprehending, that however loyal it might prove to Charles, it would show little favour for the Romish party and the priests she so zealously encouraged. The King, however, found that the idea, when once suggested, had been received so joyfully by his adherents, that he could hardly refuse his concurrence; and the news of the measure in London created a degree of anxiety that seemed to justify the transports of the royalists. The parliament was accordingly summoned to sit at Oxford; and on the 22d of January, 1644, only three days after the Scots entered England, forty-five peers and 118 commoners assembled at the royal call. The Oxford House of Peers numbered, as might be anticipated, more than double that at Westminster, but the House of Commons was more than proportionably deficient, the Westminster Commons numbering nearly 280, including those members who were serving in arms on their behalf. It was not mere want of numbers, however, that weakened this rival parliament; the popular party had recently lost their great leader, Pym, to whose statesmanship they mainly owed the new alliance with the Scots: Hampden was no more; waverers who had been retained by the commanding influence of Pym were already threatening to desert the cause; and doubt and anxiety marked the proceedings in the capital. Under these circumstances Charles might have effected much by a wise display of a voluntary return to popular forms of government. It is the best evidence of the justice of the popular cause that

this appears to have been impossible. The Oxford parliament only rendered Charles's embarrassments more complicated. He refused longer to concede to the assembly at Westminster the name of parliament; in consequence of which all possibility of negociation was at an end. The King soon found his Oxford assembly a troublesome and useless incumbrance; he openly applied the most contemptuous terms to it in conversing with his courtiers, and at length, on adjourning it, on the 16th of April, he congratulated himself to the Queen on being "rid of this mongrel parliament, the haunt of cowardly and seditious motions." Far different assemblies from these were already mustered to bring the momentous question to an issue, between despotic assumptions and the just prerogatives of the people. Before following these, however, we shall note one glimpse of Cromwell in his own secret retirement, still visible to us after the lapse of two centuries, and of more value to the reader than volumes of argument, in disproving the charges of double-dealing and hypocrisy which a succession of biographers have reiterated with such pertinacity. The incident is referred to this period, having probably occurred during the siege of Knaresborough Castle, in 1644, and has been preserved by trustworthy tradition, having been related to Sir John Goodricke when a boy by an aged nurse who was in attendance on his mother during her accouchment. The following is her very interesting narrative:—"When Cromwell came to lodge at our house in Knaresborough, I was then but a young girl. Having heard much talk about the man, I looked at him with wonder: being ordered to take a pan of coals and air his bed, I could not, during the operation, forbear peeping over my shoulder several times to observe this extraordinary person, who was seated at the far side of the room, untying his garters. Having aired the bed, I went out, and shutting the door after me,

stopped and peeped through the key-hole, when I saw him rise from his seat, advance to the bed and fall on his knees, in which attitude I left him for some time; when returning again, I found him still at prayer; and this was his custom every night, so long as he stayed at our house; from which I concluded he must be a good man; and this opinion I always maintained afterwards, though I heard him very much blamed and exceedingly abused." *

We need not follow the various movements of the different divisions of royalist and parliamentary armies previous to the decisive stroke. By able manœuvres, and daring acts of skill and bravery, each party had more or less outwitted the other, leaving the balance still uncertainly poised between them. Charles, especially, by one of the most skilful manœuvres of the whole war had rescued his army from being hemmed in by the enemy at Oxford. Scarcely, however, had he secured the safety of one large division of his adherents by his skilful tactics, than he was filled with the deepest apprehension by the news that reached him from York, of the imminent danger of that city and of the army of the Marquis of Newcastle. Under the influence of this new source of dread Charles wrote in haste to his nephew, Prince Rupert, who was at that time at the head of a large force, with which he had effected some daring successes in Cheshire and Lancashire, urging him with unwonted earnestness to hasten to the relief of York. "If York be lost I shall esteem my crown little less," he writes, and urgently enforces the necessity of relieving York *by beating the Scots.* The letter, which still exists, shows by the tremulousness of the hand-writing the excitement under which it was penned. To the impetuous Rupert its commands presented no unpleasant duty. One of the most ridiculous and fatal of all the blunders committed by Charles during the war, was the privilege he conferred on his nephew of

* Memoirs of Oliver Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 504.

receiving orders from none but himself. It largely contributed to produce jealousies, heart-burnings, and dissentions among his adherents, and effectually divided his forces on more than one occasion, when the whole chances of his cause depended on unity. All these reasons, however, tended only the more imperatively to induce in Rupert a blind obedience to such orders, when thus urgently laid upon him. He was already elated by success; he had just obtained a considerable augmentation of the division under his command by the arrival of several regiments of new levies from Ireland, and he now pushed on into Yorkshire, capturing various of the enemy's posts that fell in his way, and confidently anticipating an easy victory. When he at length poured down his elated forces into Yorkshire, he had above 20,000 men under his command, including Newcastle's cavalry, which had joined him. While the Marquis lay beleaguered in York with a force now reduced to about 6,000 men.

On learning of the approach of Prince Rupert at the head of so powerful a force, the parliamentary generals raised the siege of York, and after an ineffectual attempt to intercept the enemy, a council of war was held, in which the question of fighting or retreating was discussed without their being able to agree in opinion. While these ominous councils were threatening division and defeat to the parliamentary cause, Newcastle was in vain urging on the haughty and impetuous prince, to content himself with the important advantages already gained, and after throwing a fresh supply of men and provisions into York, to hasten back to Oxford and effect a junction with the King. Rupert would seem to have regarded the King's letter as containing an imperative command to fight the enemy at York, while his pride scorned the idea of yielding to the advice of another. The parliamentary army was already on the move, to abandon the siege, when the pursuit of Rupert's cavalry arrested their retreat. The foremost

troops were recalled, and the whole army was speedily drawn out on Long Marston Moor, within four miles of York. The day wore on, while successive movements and counter movements took place. It was the 2d of July, 1644; scarcely a shot had been fired. When both armies were completely drawn up it was after five in the evening, and nearly another hour and a half passed with little more than a few cannon shots. Newcastle considered all was over for that day, and had retired to his carriage to prepare himself by rest for whatever might betide on the morrow. Even Rupert and Cromwell are believed to have expected that their armies would pass the night on the field. It was a bright summer evening, and the calm beauty of the heavens above left light enough still for the work of destruction to proceed, and that mighty host—46,000 men, children of one race, subjects of one King—to mingle in bloody strife, and lay thousands at rest, "to sleep the sleep that knows no waking," that lovely night of July, on Long Marston Moor. It has been surmised, with considerable probability, that a stray cannon-shot which proved fatal to young Walton, Oliver Cromwell's nephew, by rousing in him every slumbering feeling of wrath and indignation, mainly contributed to bring on the general engagement. Certain it is that he was the first to lead his men to the attack.

It was within a quarter to seven on that calm evening of July, when the vast array, that spread along the wide area of Marston Moor, began to be stirred by rapid movements to the front. Along a considerable part of the ground that lay immediately between the advanced posts of the parliamentary forces and the royalist army, there ran a broad and deep ditch, which served to protect either party from sudden surprise. Towards this, a body of Cromwell's cavalry was seen to move rapidly from the rear, followed by a part of the infantry. Prince Rupert met this promptly by bringing up a body of musketeers,

who opened on them a murderous fire as they formed in front of the ditch which protected Rupert's musketeers from the cavalry, while a range of batteries, advantageously planted on a height to the rear, kept up an incessant cannonading on the whole line.

It was the first meeting of Cromwell and Rupert, commanders of genius and approved daring, who had each achieved important advantages for their own cause, by courage and skill. At this critical moment the clear-sighted genius of Cromwell shone forth. Calling his trusty Ironsides to follow, he dashed off rapidly to the right, and clearing the ditch beyond the enemy's flank, he swept down upon their right wing with such irresistible force, that the cavalry who were there, under the command of General Goring, were completely broken at the first onset. Such of them as escaped the swords of Cromwell's Ironsides, wheeled about and fled to join the cavalry under Prince Rupert's own command. The whole right wing of the royalist army was broken and dispersed. The guns were silenced along the heights in the rear, and the artillerymen fled or sabered at their posts; while Cromwell, recalling his men from the pursuit, led them back in perfect order towards their first point of attack. A very different scene had been enacted meanwhile on the left wing. Prince Rupert commanded there in person; while Fairfax, who was opposed to him, had to lead the infantry of the parliamentary army, including a considerable part of the Scots levies, through broken ground, where they were exposed to the whole fire of the enemy while they attempted to form in front. Rupert scarcely waited to see them stagger under the tremendous fire to which they were exposed, ere he dashed in upon them with his wonted impetuosity, and swept through their broken ranks with tremendous slaughter.

The centre of the two armies still maintained an uncertain fight, while the two master-spirits of these rival

forces were carrying all before them on either wing, and holding between them the balance of war. Newcastle, whose advice had been contemptuously slighted by Rupert, had joined the army at the head of a few volunteers, offended like himself at the imperious rashness of the King's nephew; but the regiment composed of his own tenants and personal retainers, stood their ground for a time against Cromwell's tremendous onset, and when at length his victorious Ironsides swept over them, they lay an unbroken line of noble dead along the ground they had been called to occupy. Cromwell, ever skilful in rallying his men, returned towards the centre of action just as the victorious Rupert dashed on at the head of his exulting cavalry, confident that the field was already won. Cromwell himself was wounded in the neck at the first onset, and his invincible cavalry seemed to shake before the assault of their exulting foes. But they rallied the next instant, while Lesley led up at that critical moment a chosen body of Scottish veterans, and their combined attack scattered the prince's cavalry and swept them from the field.

The victory was complete; the royalist army was entirely broken and dispersed; fifteen hundred of their number remained prisoners. The whole of their arms and artillery, their tents, baggage, and military chest, remained the spoils of the victors. Prince Rupert's own standard, and more than a hundred others, had fallen into their hands; and York, which Rupert had entered only three days before, in defiance of their arms, now lay at their mercy. A strange and fearful scene spread out beneath the starry sky on that calm summer eve, as it darkened to midnight on Long Marston Moor. Five thousand men lay dead or dying there; born of the same lineage, and subjects of one king; who yet had fallen by one another's hands. It was the bloodiest battle of the whole war, and irretrievably ruined the King's hopes in the

north. This was enough to satisfy the victors; though they showed soon after some thought of what they conceived due to the sons of a common country thus impelled to bloody strife by the distinctions of party, by separating from all the rights of honourable foes the Irish levies, whose religion, no less than the savage deeds of plunder, marauding, and cruelty of every kind, which marked their progress, aggravated with the horrors of a barbarian invasion, the unavoidable miseries of civil war. At length the parliament promulgated, about three months after, the exterminating ordinance, which the provocation excited by such cruelties could alone justify, commanding "to hang any Irish Papist taken in arms in England."

Long after midnight Rupert and Newcastle re-entered York. They exchanged messages without meeting; Rupert intimating his intention of departing southward on the following morning with as many of the horse and foot as had kept together; and Newcastle returning word that he intended immediately to go to the sea-side and embark for the continent; a desertion rendered justifiable when we remember that his advice had been contemptuously slighted, and his command superseded by the rash nephew of Charles, acting under the King's orders. Each kept his word, and in a fortnight thereafter York was in the possession of their opponents.

The following letter, written by Cromwell, to Colonel Valentine Walton, the husband of his younger sister Margaret, conveys to his brother-in-law the news of the great victory, and of his own son's being among the slain; the same whose fall is thought, "by rousing Oliver's humour to the charging point," to have brought on the general engagement. The letter is nobly characteristic of the man. The exultation of the enthusiastic victor, ascribing all the praise to God, while no hint escapes to tell of his own leading share in the fortunes of the day; and then the abrupt, yet most sympathizing reference to the

death of his nephew, which is so skilfully and tenderly interwoven with his exultation at the great victory, that it seems, as it were, a necessary feature of the triumph of England and the church of God.*

"Leaguer before York, 5th July, 1644.

"DEAR SIR,

It's our duty to sympathize in all mercies; and to praise the Lord together in chastisements or trials, that so we may sorrow together.

"Truly England and the church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord, in this great victory given unto us, such as the like never was since this war began. It had all the evidences of an absolute victory obtained by the Lord's blessing upon the godly party principally. We never charged but we routed the enemy. The left wing, which I commanded, being our own horse, saving a few Scots in our rear, beat all the Prince's horses. God made them as stubble to our swords. We charged their regiments of foot with our horse, and routed all we charged. The particulars I cannot relate now; but I believe of twenty thousand the Prince hath not four thousand left. Give glory, all the glory to God.

"Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon-shot. It brake his leg. We were necessitated to have it cut off, whereof he died.

"Sir, you know my own trials this way: but the Lord supported me with this, That the Lord took him into the happiness we all pant for and live for. There is your precious child full of glory, never to know sin or sorrow any more. He was a gallant young man, exceedingly gracious. God give you His comfort. Before his death he was so full of comfort that to Frank Russel and myself he could not express it, 'It was so great above his pain.' This he said to us. Indeed it was admirable. A little after he said, one thing lay upon his spirit. I asked

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 195

him what that was? he told me it was, That God had not suffered him to be any more the executioner of His enemies. At his fall, his horse being killed with the bullet, and as I am informed, three horses more, I am told he bid them open to the right and left, that he might see the rogues run. Truly he was exceedingly beloved in the army, of all that knew him. 'But few knew him; for he was a precious young man, fit for God. You have cause to bless the Lord. He is a glorious saint in heaven; wherein you ought exceedingly to rejoice. Let this drink up your sorrow; seeing these are not feigned words to comfort you, but the thing is so real and undoubted a truth. You may do all things by the strength of Christ. Seek that, and you shall easily bear your trial. Let this public mercy to the church of God make you to forget your private sorrow. The Lord be your strength: so prays

Your truly faithful and loving brother,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

"My love to your daughter, and my cousin Perceval, sister Desbrow and all friends with you."

The decisive battle of Marston Moor was the triumph of military genius and skilful generalship over daring personal courage and rashness. The soldiers of Cromwell had broken the royalist squadrons, and scattered both wings of the army before their irresistible onset. It was on this field that they and their general received their immortal name of *Ironsides*. While Cromwell was thus showing himself ever more clearly as the approved popular leader, to whose genius and intrepidity the country must turn for guidance and safety, Essex had allowed himself to be out-generaled by a series of masterly movements of Charles, and now lay cooped up in Cornwall, the great stronghold of the royalists. The difference, indeed, between these two generals involved the wide one that separates between the man of calm resolve, with a definite

purpose in view, and the timid worshipper of expediency, who rather hopes to stumble on some means of escape from a dilemma, than to compel success. Driven to extremity he would conquer rather than suffer defeat; but, unless by such constraint, time wore away with him in fruitless campaigns, wherein victory seemed scarcely less dreaded than defeat. Yet, driven to extremity, Essex was still faithful to the parliament. The King sent a message to him, couched in the most flattering language of esteem, and full of promises of high reward, urging him *to give peace to his country;* but his sole reply to the King was to return to the parliament. At length hemmed in beyond hope of escape, his cavalry forced their way through two divisions of the enemy during a dark night, leaving the infantry to their fate. Essex, attended by only two of his officers, made his escape to Plymouth by sea, and the whole of the infantry were compelled to lay down their arms and to capitulate.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY.

THE Commons received their unsuccessful general with countenance and encouragement that took him altogether by surprise. "With a kind of Roman dignity," as Carlyle remarks, "they rather thanked him and assured him of the continuance of their good affections and high esteem." This, which was worthy of their dignified policy, was no more than Essex merited from them for his fidelity, notwithstanding his total failure. He was commanded to reassemble an army as speedily as possible in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth and Southampton, while Waller was directed to co-operate with him, and Manchester was summoned to join them with the conquerors of Marston Moor. Lieutenant-

General Cromwell marched with Manchester, and a considerable army was speedily formed by the junction of these various divisions, which at length came into collision with the royal army, commanded by Charles in person, in the neighbourhood of Newbury, the scene of a former battle. Here, however, the timid counsels of Manchester, who commanded in the absence of the despondent Essex, cheated Cromwell of all the fruits of victory. Charles had taken up a position with great skill, and had strengthened its natural advantages by all the arts of military engineering then in use. Cromwell, however, discovered his assailable point, and, while a tremendous cannonade along the whole line was employed to distract the attention of the enemy, he poured down on them in two columns from a height which commanded their centre, and these suddenly dividing as they reached the plain, the royalists were driven from their ground, and compelled to retreat in total confusion into the town. Still one central position, fortified by nature and art, resisted every effort of the parliamentary leader, though the ground all around it was strewed with the dead; and the day closed, leaving it in the possession of the royalists. "It was a moonlight night which followed, and anxious thoughts occupied both camps, of the desperate strife that must decide the morrow. Suddenly the penetrating and sleepless eye of Cromwell saw the royalists move. It was so. Charles having utterly lost his left position, had despaired of the poor chance that remained to him in face of such a foe. His army were now busy, in that moonlight, conveying into the castle by a circuitous route, their guns and heavy stores, while behind, battalion after battalion was noiselessly quitting its ground, and marching off as silently in the direction of Oxford. Over and over again Cromwell entreated Manchester to suffer him to execute a forward movement with his cavalry—at that critical moment he would have prostrated Charles. Manchester refused. A

show was made next morning of pursuit, but of course without effect—Charles, with all his material and prisoners, had effected a clear escape. Nor was this all. While the castle of Dennington remained unmolested amidst the dreadful dissensions which after this event raged through the parliamentarian camp, the King, having been reinforced by Rupert and an excellent troop of horse, returned twelve days after, assumed the offensive in the face of his now inactive conquerors, carried off all his cannon and heavy stores from out of the castle, coolly and uninterruptedly fell back again, and marched unmolested into Oxford."*

It was the close of the campaign that had begun with such bright promise; the sole fruits, as it seemed, which were to reward the bloody victory of Marston Moor. It was the close too of hearty co-operation between the Presbyterian party, who had hitherto formed the great and influential majority, and the Independents, who were now rapidly rising into influence and power. Cromwell was no unworthy representative of the latter. The Presbyterians undoubtedly aimed mainly at substituting presbytery for episcopacy, and restoring the monarchy under such limitations as might secure to the Commons a preponderating influence in the government. Already the Independent party numbered zealous republicans who smiled at chivalrous loyalty as an antiquated superstition, and anticipated the speedy establishment of a form of government wherein the people should be sole king. Very many of them, however, stopped far short of this. There is unquestionable evidence that Cromwell himself, at a considerably later date, indulged in the thought of Charles's restoration to his crown, under such limitations as should secure the national liberties. A far-reaching toleration, however, was aimed at by the Independents at a very early period, such as no other party in the seventeenth century had any conception of.

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 145.

Such were the rival opinions that assumed form in the opposition of Manchester and Cromwell, after the failure of this second Newbury fight. "They in fact came to a quarrel here," says Carlyle,* "these two:—and much else that was represented by them came to a quarrel; presbytery and independency, to wit. Manchester was reported to have said, If they lost this army pursuing the King, they had no other; the King might hang them all. To Cromwell and the thorough-going party, it had become very clear that high Essexes and Manchesters, of limited notions and large estates and anxieties, who besides their fear of being themselves beaten utterly, and forfeited and 'hanged,' were afraid of beating the King too well, would never end this cause in a good way."

There was need, indeed, even as mere commanders, that these two should part. Manchester, though an honest and tolerably courageous man, had none of that calm fearlessness and vigour of mind which rise to meet an emergency. Events which roused in Cromwell only determination and resolve filled Manchester with irresolution and doubt; and at such times Cromwell's mode of dealing with the noble *doubter* was little calculated to soothe his irritated pride. He seems to have told him his mind in the plainest terms that could convey it, and is even reported to have exclaimed on one occasion when somewhat chafed at his irresolute proceedings:—"There will never be a good time in England till we have done with lords!"

A clear necessity for some speedy and very decisive change was apparent to all; the House of Commons ordered an inquiry, and Cromwell lost no time in availing himself of the opportunity to urge his complaint against the Earl of Manchester. The result of it was, at length, the famous Self-denying Ordinance, by which it was enacted, that no member of either House should, during the

* Carlyle's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 199.

continuation of the war, enjoy or execute any office or command, civil or military. The object of the movers is generally affirmed to have been to remove moderate men, and particularly the Presbyterian leaders, from all influence in the army, and confine them to the House of Commons, making them in appearance masters of the army, that it might thereby acquire the complete master and control. That the Independent party really wished to secure the triumph of their own views can admit of no question; in this they differed in no way from the other parties with whom they contended. But when we examine into the definite forms which their demands then assumed, there can be no doubt that, however chimerical some of their refined republican idealism might be, their objects were in the main more for the good of the whole. While this Ordinance was pending, and threatened with rejection by the Peers, the King had yielded once more to acknowledge the parliament by name, and to enter into negotiations with it. Commissioners again met from Oxford and Westminster, with mutual hope of promoting peace. The real difficulty, however, was the uncompromising spirit with which each party struggled for the one essential concession on which it deemed its whole interests to hinge. "Each of the parliamentary factions," says Guizot, "had its fundamental point, of which it would not bate a jot; the Presbyterians the privileged establishment of their Church; the politicians the command of the militia; the Independents *liberty of conscience.*" The negotiations entirely failed, chiefly through the faithless obstinacy of the King. Meanwhile, the different parties into which the parliament was divided had not been idle. "Compelled to abandon, for a while at least, the Self-denying Ordinance, the Independents had directed their most ardent efforts to the measure which was to accompany it, the reorganization of the army. In a few days, everything had been prepared, concerted, settled;

the plan, the form, the expense, the means of providing for it. Only one army was for the future to be kept on foot, composed of 21,000 men, and commanded by one general, who was even to be invested with the right of naming all the officers, subject to the approbation of parliament. This general was Fairfax. For a long time past, his distinguished valour, the frankness of his character, the success of his expeditions, the warlike enthusiasm with which his presence inspired the troops, had fixed public attention upon him; and Cromwell had answered, publicly in the House, privately to his party, for the fitness of this choice. Essex retained his rank, Waller and Manchester their commissions, but without even a shadow of power. On the 28th of January, the Ordinance, which was to regulate the execution of this measure, was sent to the Lords. They endeavoured at least to retard its adoption, by proposing various amendments, and protracting the debate on each. But in this instance resistance was difficult, for the Ordinance had the sanction of the people, who were convinced that the multiplicity of armies and their chiefs was the true cause of the prolongation and inefficiency of the war. Strong in this support, the Commons urged the measure forward; the Lords at last yielded, (Feb. 15;) and on the 19th of February, two days before the rupture of the negotiations at Uxbridge, Fairfax, introduced into the House, received with a simple and modest air, standing by the chair which had been prepared for him, the official compliments of the Speaker." *

A few weeks afterwards Essex rose in his place in the House of Peers, and resigned his commission. The Earls of Denbigh and Manchester followed his example, and the Commons, while voting them thanks for the patriotic sacrifice, felt that they had been happily delivered from a dilemma that threatened to grow ever more involved.

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, pp. 264, 265.

All difficulty was now removed regarding the Self-denying Ordinance, which, with some modifications, was immediately passed by both Houses of parliament. Not the least important of its clauses, introduced with some difficulty in its final modification, enacted, that religious men might serve without being bound to sign the Covenant as an indispensable preliminary; a clause clearly indicating that Independency was in the ascendant.

It is well known that almost immediately after this self-denying ordinance had passed, Cromwell resumed his command. The explanation has been very simple to all royalist biographers, who, in their zeal to prove his consummate hypocrisy in this and other points, are willing to concede to him an amount of perverted genius and foresight almost supernatural. With less prejudiced minds, one or two later biographers adopt the same style of reasoning under different guise, and it becomes in their hands a master-stroke of policy, such as would have done honour to the ablest diplomatist Europe ever saw. After all, may it not greatly tend to simplify the matter if we believe that Cromwell was really sincere—that he had perfect faith in the army if freed from timorous leaders; even if it were necessary, in order to get quit of these, to remove also those who had led them to victory; and that he was content to lay down his commission with the rest. Let us glance at the account of his resuming it as related by Monsieur Guizot—as thorough a believer in the wild fanaticism of independency, and the deep laid hypocrisy of Cromwell, as any royalist of the seventeeth century. "When it was known at Oxford," says he,* "what obstacles impeded the reorganization of the parliamentary army, when the regiments were seen in insurrection, and the most illustrious officers put aside, confidence and gaiety reappeared among the cavaliers. Soon they only spoke with derision of this mob of peasants and

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, p. 270.

preaching mechanics, idiots enough to drive from them generals whose names and ability had constituted their sole strength, and to raise to the command officers as obscure, as utter novices, as their soldiers. Songs, jests, puns, were daily sent forth against the parliament and its defenders; and the King, in spite of his grave temperament, allowed himself to be persuaded by these convenient arguments. He had, besides, secret hopes, arising from intrigues of which even his most intimate confidants were ignorant.

"Towards the end of April, Fairfax announced that in a few days he should open the campaign. Cromwell went to Windsor, to kiss, as he said, the general's hand, and take him his resignation. On seeing him enter the room, Fairfax said, 'I have just received from the committee of the two kingdoms an order which has reference to you; it directs you to proceed directly with some horse, to the road between Oxford and Worcester, to intercept communications between Prince Rupert and the King.' The same evening Cromwell departed on his mission, and in five days, before any other corps of the new army had put itself in motion, he had beaten the royalists in three encounters, (April 24, at Islip-bridge; 26, at Witney; 27, at Bampton Bush,) taken Bletchington, (April 24,) and sent to the House a full report of his success. 'Who will bring me this Cromwell, dead or alive!' cried the King; while in London all were rejoicing that he had not yet given in his resignation.

"A week had scarcely passed, and the parliament had already made up its mind that he should not resign. The campaign had commenced (April 30.) The King, quitting Oxford, (May 7,) had rejoined prince Rupert, and was proceeding towards the north, either to raise the siege of Chester, or to give battle to the Scottish army, and regain on that side his former advantages; if he succeeded, he would be in a position to threaten, as he pleased, the east

or the south; and Fairfax, then on his way to the west, to deliver the important town of Taunton, closely invested by the prince of Wales, could not oppose his progress. Fairfax was recalled (May 5;) but, meantime, Cromwell alone was in a condition to watch the King's movements. Notwithstanding the ordinance, he received orders to continue his service forty days (May 10.) Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Middleton, and Sir John Price, distinguished officers, and members of the Commons, received similar orders, either from similar motives, or that Cromwell might not seem the only exception."

The services immediately effected by Cromwell, abundantly proved the necessity of retaining him in his command. Prince Rupert sent 2000 men to Oxford to convoy the King, with the artillery, to Worcester, where he had now drawn a considerable force together. Cromwell attacked and routed the convoy, and the same day took Bletchington House from the royalists, under circumstances seemingly so disadvantageous, that its poor royalist commander was shot by his own party for yielding it; while Cromwell was busy sending off the captured guns and stores. Only two days after he gained another decided advantage over the enemy; and even tried, though unsuccessfully, to compel the surrender of a considerable garrison at Farringdon, before he joined Fairfax in the neighbourhood of Oxford. Meanwhile the parliament were alarmed by unfavourable news from nearly every other quarter. Montrose was effecting a powerful division in favour of royalty in the north. The King had marched on Chester and raised the siege. Cambridge itself was threatened, and Cromwell was looked to as the only man fit to guard the scene of his earliest triumphs. He was soon recalled from this post to avert more imminent danger. The king had taken the town of Leicester by storm: Taunton was closely besieged; and utter consternation prevailed in London and Westminster, except

among those who rejoiced in what they regarded as the fruits of the ordinance and other measures of the Independent party, which the Presbyterians had exerted themselves ineffectually to prevent being passed. The Common Council petitioned parliament, demanding a freer discretion to be given to the general, and the permanent restoration of Cromwell to his former command. The latter was confirmed by an application, signed by General Fairfax and sixteen of his chief officers, for Cromwell to join him, as an officer indispensably needed to command the cavalry.

On the 12th of June, 1645, a reconnoitering party of the parliamentary cavalry unexpectedly came upon a detachment of the royal army, leisurely returning from the north, on the news of the threatened blockade of Oxford. The King was flushed with the highest hopes. The success of Montrose in the north promised to free him from all fear in that direction, and he daily anticipated a body of troops to join him from the west. The meeting of the outposts of the two armies was in the neighbourhood of Northampton; but the King fell back immediately towards Leicester, to allow his whole forces to draw together. On the following day Cromwell joined Fairfax, amid shouts from the whole army, and a few hours afterwards the King learned that the squadrons under his command were already harassing the rear. Prince Rupert advised an immediate attack on the enemy; a council of war was held, and many of the officers urged delay till the expected reinforcements should join them, but Rupert's advice prevailed. On the field of Naseby the two armies met once more in deadly fight, early on the morning of the 14th of June.

The incidents of the decisive battle of Naseby bear in some points a close resemblance to those of Marston Moor, yet with sufficiently striking points of contrast. The old hamlet of Naseby still stands on the broad high moorland

on the north-west border of Northamptonshire, nearly a central point of England, where King Charles fought his last battle,—dashed fiercely against the army which till then he had scorned, and saw himself shivered utterly to ruin. There was this difference, among others, between Long Marston Moor and Naseby—in the former, the shadows of evening were already stealing over the plain when the fight began; in the latter both armies were in motion at the dawn, promising no early darkness to shelter the fugitives, or cover for a while the unburied dead. Prince Rupert, ever the same, charged in advance of the main army, and dashing on with wonted impetuosity at the head of the right wing of the cavalry, he broke the left wing of the enemy, commanded by Ireton,—afterwards Cromwell's son-in-law. Ireton himself was severely wounded, and his squadron thrown for a time into complete confusion; but Rupert followed up his success, as usual, without regard to the operations of the general army, and, chasing the flying squadrons before him, only stopped when the sight of their well-defended baggage offered a still stronger temptation to his habits of disorderly pillage. While Rupert's undisciplined impetuosity had thus carried him away from the field of action after one brave, but altogether temporary piece of service for the King, Cromwell had been equally successful against the left wing of the royalists; and, after seeing its squadrons broken and scattered in irretrievable confusion, he posted a small detachment to occupy the ground and defeat every attempt at rallying, and hastened to lead the main body of the cavalry back to the field of battle. The two armies were nearly equal in point of numbers, and the royalists were excited to unusual confidence by the presence of the King, who commanded the centre in person, and exhibited the utmost courage and daring. But while the right wing of of the royalist cavalry, after its one vehement piece of

service, had ceased to co-operate with the main body, which almost immediately entered into action, Cromwell had led back his victorious squadrons to the aid of the centre divisions of the parliamentary army. Led on by the King in person, the royalists had thrown them into considerable confusion for a time, but Fairfax rallied his men, and by a most daring and skilfully-executed manœuvre, outflanked a division of the royalist infantry, so as to take them in the rear, while Charles Doyley, the colonel of his guard, charged them in front, and literally met his general in the centre of the broken division. Fairfax took the enemy's colours with his own hand, and already the whole centre of the royal army was giving way, when Cromwell returned with his victorious squadrons. Charles put himself at the head of his own life-guards, resolved at all hazards to withstand this new enemy; but terror for his personal safety overcame all other thoughts in his devoted followers. "Do you wish to be killed?" exclaimed the Earl of Carnwarth, seizing his horse's bridle, and turning him to the right. In vain the poor King exhibited the most desperate courage. He called to a group of officers around him to stop Pointing with his sword to the enemy, he dashed forward, exclaiming, with despairing vehemence, "Charge yet again, and the day is ours." But already the infantry were completely broken, and flying in every direction. Prince Rupert returned from his insane assault on the baggage, only in time to form around the disordered and hopeless adherents who still stood by the King, and, surrounded with about 2000 horse, he at length fled from the fatal field, leaving baggage, artillery, ammunition, and all the spoils of his camp in the possession of the victors. He took refuge in the town of Leicester, where also there lodged that night, as we have good reason to believe, another refugee—a common soldier of the King's army, deemed then worth no more than is implied in the

poor pay and hazardous duties of such an occupation, but whom not a few now agree in thinking the world could less have spared than the king for whom he was fighting. John Bunyan it was; who undoubtedly served at the siege of Leicester, and, as seems most probable, on the King's side. He was drawn out to take his turn as sentinel, but one of his comrades, at his own desire, superseded him, was shot through the head on his post, and Bunyan lived to comprehend, long after, the signal mercy of that hour, and to delight and benefit succeeding ages by his wonderful writings.

One little extract we must find room for here, a passage from Carlyle's graphic notes, embodying one of those happy touches by which he occasionally reminds his readers that the actors in these grand historic events were really none other than men like ourselves. "The parliamentary army," he observes,* "stood ranged on the height still partly called Mill Hill, as in Rushworth's time, a mile and a half from Naseby; the King's army on a parallel hill, its back to Harborough;—with the wide table of upland now named Broad Moor between them; where indeed the main brunt of the action still clearly enough shows itself to have been. There are hollow spots, of a rank vegetation, scattered over the Broad Moor; which are understood to have once been burial *mounds;* some of which have been (with more or less of sacrilege) verified as such. A friend of mine has in his cabinet two ancient grinder teeth, dug lately from that ground,—and waits for an opportunity to rebury them there. Sound effectual grinders, one of them very large; which ate their breakfast on the fourteenth morning of June two hundred years ago, and, except to be clenched once in grim battle, had never work to do more in this world!—'A stack of dead bodies, perhaps about 100, had been buried in this trench; piled as in a wall, a man's

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 212.

length thick: the skeletons lay in courses, the heads of one course to the heels of the next;—one figure, by the strange position of the bones, gave us the hideous notion of its having been thrown in *before* death! We did not proceed far—perhaps some half-dozen skeletons. The bones were treated with all piety, watched rigorously, over Sunday, till they could be covered in again.'"

Cromwell's letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons is brief, but highly characteristic. His allusions both to his superior in command, General Fairfax, and to his inferiors, the "honest men" whom some of the Commons he knew looked upon with little favour, as *sectaries* and *schismatics*, contain the whole spirit and meaning of much longer letters:—*

"*For the Honourable William Lenthall, Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament: These.*

"SIR, Harborough, 15th June. 1645.

Being commanded by you to this service. I think myself bound to acquaint you with the good hand of God towards you and us.

"We marched yesterday after the King, who went before us from Daventry to Harborough; and quartered about six miles from him. This day we marched towards him. He drew out to meet us; both armies engaged. We, after three hours fight very doubtful, at last routed his army; killed and took about 5000—very many officers, but of what quality we yet know not. We took also about 200 carriages, all he had; and all his guns, being twelve in number, whereof two were demi-cannon, two demi-culverins, and I think the rest sackers. We pursued the enemy from three miles short of Harborough, to nine beyond, even to the sight of Leicester, whither the King fled.

"Sir, this is none other but the hand of God; and to

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. I. p. 214.

Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him. The General served you with all faithfulness and honour; and the best commendation I can give him is, that I daresay he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume to himself, which is an honest and a thriving way; and yet as much for bravery may be given to him in this action as to a man. Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you in the name of God, not to discourage them. I wish this action may beget thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for. In this he rests, who is

"Your most humble servant,

"OLIVER CROMWELL."

Never was a victory more opportune or less expected. The enemy were completely broken, routed, and dispersed. The spoils, which served to augment the resources of the parliamentary army, left the King utterly destitute. But the most important of these spoils that fell into their hands, was the whole of the King's cabinet papers, including evidence of a degree of faithlessness and duplicity on his part that has sufficed to render a byeword, even to our own day, his favourite exclamation, "On the word of a king!" It was now proved beyond a doubt, that Charles had never desired peace; that he had never held any of the promises made or offered by him to the popular party as obligatory; that, indeed, so systematic was his faithlessness, that he had even privately protested against his own official act, by which he had restored the means of negotiating with the parliament, when he conceded to them that name. The letters, which were undoubtedly authentic, were read aloud to the assembled citizens in Guildhall; were published under the title of "The King's

Cabinet Opened;" were even exposed to view, that every citizen might satisfy himself. *On the word of a king*, indeed! That at least lost much of its sacredness for a time; came indeed to mean something very different from that of an honest man, and so rendered very hopeless all further attempts at negotiation with royalty. The case was desperate indeed with the King, for no evidence of reason or fortune seemed capable of uprooting his faith in the "divinity that doth hedge a king." He wandered a fugitive from place to place, scarcely venturing sometimes to spend even a few hours in a resting-place; and yet, after nearly three months of such hopeless wanderings, when even the impetuous Rupert wrote to him that all was lost, and urged him to make peace on any terms, he replied, "I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels to prosper, or his cause to be overthrown." So apt a pupil had Charles proved in his father's hands. Guided by this overruling conviction of divine right, which he seemed to regard as investing him with absolute irresponsibility, he had secretly concluded a treaty of alliance with the Irish rebels, engaging, in return for their services, the complete abolition of all the penal laws against Catholics, full liberty for their worship, and permanent security in the possession of all churches and lands which they had seized. This treaty, of which not even the most confidential English councillors of the King, were informed, and which amounted in fact to the complete triumph of Popery, and the ruin of every Protestant in Ireland, had come to the knowledge of the parliamentary leaders. Concealing their discovery with consummate skill, they waited an opportunity when the King, by well-timed offers of peace, was seeking to discredit the parliament with the people. Then, proclaiming his faithless duplicity, they produced the proofs of this treaty, and utterly disconcerted the King and his advisers. Charles's cause was hopelessly ruined in England: one only refuge remained possible for the

fugitive King. The French minister had already been trying to pave the way for his reception by the Scottish army, whose policy, resolutely based on the original Presbyterian League and Covenant, had gradually been placing it more and more at variance with their former friends and allies the Independent party. The King had been persuaded that the Scots were still ready to covenant with him, and would receive him as their legitimate sovereign. The Scottish officers, however, to whom M. de Montreuil, the French Minister, addressed himself on behalf of Charles, were little more inclined to compromise themselves on behalf of the discomfited King, than either the Scottish commissioners in London, or the parliamentary leaders at Edinburgh, had proved. They had no objections to save the King, but they were evidently resolved not to quarrel with the English parliament. When Charles, at length, on the 5th of May, 1646, delivered himself up to the Scottish army, encamped before Newark, there was little grace in the act, as necessity had left him scarcely a choice. Montreuil, indeed, had informed the King that the step was hazardous, and any other refuge preferable, but he was already a fugitive, continually changing his disguise, and exposed to daily apprehensions, which rendered any prospect of a safe retreat acceptable. With clipped beard, and disguised as the groom of one of his adherents, Charles entered the Scottish camp. Of all the gallant and haughty squadrons of cavaliers, and well-appointed troops of retainers that had so recently marshalled around his standard, and made English Roundheads and Scottish Covenanters the butt of their broadest jests, not one remained to stand between the King and his last hope in the favour of honourable or interested foes. Yet his Majesty fancied, not altogether without reason, that his cession to the one side or to the other, was in itself a host. The King's name was a tower of strength for the men of that age, to a degree which we now find some

difficulty in fully appreciating. Had not his own intractable faithlessness rendered any agreement impossible, the solitary fugitive might once more have kinged it over them all. The Earl of Leven and the Scottish officers treated him with the utmost respect and deference, but at the same time, expresses were despatched both to London and Edinburgh to announce his arrival. A strong guard was placed on his lodging, and when the poor King, to ascertain if he was still free, offered to give the pass-word for the night, "Pardon me, sire," said Leven, "I am the oldest soldier here; your Majesty will permit me to undertake that duty." A few detached strongholds were still in the possession of the royalists, and one or two of them were even held out for several months after this; but with the entry of Charles into the Scots' camp at Newark, the first civil war may be considered as at an end. When Sir Jacob Astley, the last royalist leader who had been able to keep the field, was defeated and taken prisoner, "Now," said he, to the parliamentary commander, on being conveyed to head quarters, "Now you have done your work, and may go play; unless you choose to fall out among yourselves."

CHAPTER XI.

THE REGICIDES.

A PERIOD of deep interest to the rival parties into which England was divided followed immediately on the close of the first civil war. It was a second war, still more difficult than the first, in which diplomacy and intricate negotiations were the weapons by which mastery was sought to be achieved. "The conquering of the King had been a difficult operation;" says Carlyle,

"but to make a treaty with him now when he was conquered proved an impossible one." All attempts at negotiation were found to be fruitless. The King was, in fact, *conscientious*, and therefore altogether hopeless in his duplicity, holding himself bound by no agreement he might enter into with rebellious subjects, and considering himself justified in deceiving them by the most shameless duplicity. The King was still flattering himself with the faithless hope, thus expressed, in writing to Lord Digby, "I do not despair of inducing the Presbyterians or the Independents to join with me in exterminating one another; and then I shall be King again," when the Scottish and English parliaments, who found all attempt at treaty with him vain and impossible, completed mutual agreements without him. "I am bought and sold," exclaimed the King when he learned that the Scots had agreed to surrender him to the English parliament. This exclamation, which was natural enough to Charles under such circumstances, has been re-echoed by nearly every historian, and the Scottish nation charged as guilty of the indelible disgrace of having sold their king. Zealous preachers of *divine right* even proved it unparalleled save by our Saviour's betrayal; and Dr. Samuel Johnson found in it abundant justification for his ridiculous national prejudices! A few words may put the whole question at rest. The Scots began their determined resistance to the policy of Charles the very day that Laud's service-book was attempted to be read in the Old Church of St. Giles, at Edinburgh. They maintained their resolute front against every attempted encroachment on what they regarded as the precious fruits of the Reformation. United as a nation in conscientious adherence to the faith and forms of the Presbyterian Church, with a degree of unanimity scarcely manifested in the history of any other people, they had refused to league with the friends of liberty in England on any other terms than the mutual

recognition of that solemn Covenant, which had so long been regarded as one of the chief defences of their national faith. But this conceded to them, they marched, as we have already seen, through storm and snow, resolute in aiding the English parliament against their despotic King. It was to these allies, who had shared in the victory of Marston Moor, and contributed so largely to turn the scale of victory to the side of the parliament, that Charles addressed himself for protection, at a time when he hoped that the differences existing between the Presbyterian and Independent parties might incline the former to welcome his accession to them. The Scots, in good faith, offered to negotiate with him if he would take the Covenant. A Presbyterian people in fact offered to acknowledge him as a Presbyterian king. But this he refused; and his resolute adherence to episcopacy declared all hope of mutual agreement was at an end. The General Assembly of the Scottish Church protested against periling the union of the kingdoms to serve a prince who rejected the Covenant of Christ; and the Scottish leaders delivered up the King to the commissioners appointed by the English parliament. The object of the Scots' invasion was at an end, and on receiving their arrears of pay, claimed long before, and which have become in the eyes of prejudiced royalists and Jacobites, *the thirty pieces of silver of these Scottish Judases*, they took their departure homeward, having accomplished the very object for which they had entered England.

The proceedings of the English Presbyterian party meanwhile, were tending towards other results. They had obtained for a time supremacy in parliament, and while rejoicing over the triumphs achieved by the army, looked upon it as their faithful and willing servant. Such an army, however, had scarcely ever before assembled in defence of popular rights. From the General to the humblest subaltern they were actuated by one spirit, each fighting against the crown, as a power that had encroached

on rights chartered to them by God himself; an army of kings fighting against one. No wonder that such should be found to question the proceedings of parliament also, when it stood in the King's place only to change one yoke for another. A little later Cromwell himself puts the question thus, when writing to his kinsman, Hammond, the custodier of the King in the Isle of Wight, after asking, "Whether salus populi be a sound position?" and this and other positions being assumed in the very nature of things as they then stood, he goes on to ask, "Whether this army be not a lawful power, called by God to oppose and fight against the King upon some stated grounds; and being in power to such ends, may not oppose one name of authority for those ends as well as another? the outward authority, that called them, not by their power making the quarrel lawful; but it being so in itself. If so, it may be, acting will be justified in foro humano;"—acting against abused authority, under any name.

The position of Presbyterianism in Scotland and England was altogether different. Among the Scots, where almost perfect unanimity prevailed as to the national religion, presbytery was welcomed as the supremacy of right and truth over error. The case, however, was altogether different in England; presbytery there was merely one of the many forms which dissent from the intolerant Church courts and Star-Chamber of Laud had assumed. The alliance with Scotland had strengthened it for a time, and the conditions on which co-operation with England had been agreed to, tended for a time to give it apparently the sanction of the nation. A very different party, however, had united with them against the encroachments of irresponsible power. Young Milton had already made himself heard, and in noble and most powerful language had summoned his countrymen to contend for liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, and all the great popular rights which have

since been gradually secured to the nation. A numerous party, including many of the ablest men of the age, had responded to such sentiments, and these were not the men likely to sit down contented with the exchange of Prelatic for Presbyterian rule. Absolute uniformity was vainly aimed at by the reformers, amid such a clash of opinions of divine right and apostolic succession, presbytery, independency, and all the varied forms of newly-acquired freedom of thought. Usher, Howe, Baxter, Jeremy Taylor, Bunyan, Fox, and every other man of independent thought, were all to be bound down to the same rule! Such, surely, was not the object for which Milton beheld England "as a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself as a strong man after sleep, or as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam;" as little indeed as was the *glorious restoration* which seemed for a time its only fruits. Against such a consummation Cromwell set himself with determined resolution. It was for no such poor exchange that he had left the happy domestic circle at Ely, and exchanged the plough and pruning hook for the sword. Some time, however, elapsed before each party took up its own ground. When Cromwell returned to parliament after the conclusion of the campaign, he was welcomed with extraordinary honours. The Speaker rose with the whole members to receive him on his entering the House, and communicated to him in flattering terms the thanks of the parliament for his great and valuable services. Soon after, both valuable lands and money were conferred on him as more substantial tokens of gratitude, and an order passed the great seal desiring his Majesty to confer and settle on Lieutenant-General Oliver Cromwell, and the heirs male of his body, the title and dignity of a baron of the kingdom of England. While these steps were being carried out in London, his Majesty,—who was thus acknowledged as still being the sole fount of

honour, by the somewhat equivocal deference which made him the rewarder of his conqueror,—was exposed to the chances of the strife that now threatened to render the parliament and their army antagonists. Under the influence chiefly of Cromwell, the parliamentary army had gradually been weeded of all unstable trimmers, and, to a great extent, of that class of moderate but feeble politicians not unaptly represented by their former leader, Essex, who rather assumed arms with the hope of thereby intimidating the King, and inducing him to concede their demands, than with any thought of dictating terms to a vanquished oppressor. Among the latter class of timid politicians a great portion of the Presbyterians were included, and while the unity of their aims and the republican forms of their ecclesiastical system gave them strength, their lack both of promptness of action and determined energy enabled Cromwell and the Independent party to triumph while others were discussing their plans. The King and his confidential advisers soon saw that this was the party they must pacify or deceive; and many negotiations were opened with Cromwell, in which there seems not the slightest evidence to discredit the perfect sincerity of the latter, and his desire to establish a constitutional monarchy, wherein the popular rights would be placed on a safe and permanent basis.

It is not necessary to follow out the various struggles between the parties thus getting arrayed against one another, for the custody of the King, and the attainment of their separate objects, after the departure of the Scots. Various negotiations were opened by the King with all the leaders in succession, occasionally with several of them at once, but only with the usual results. Charles contrived to ruin every attempt at his restoration to the throne by the most fatal treachery; and nothing so strongly proves how deep-rooted was the veneration for the monarchy, with all its halo of rights and honours

chartered by Heaven, than the patience with which the very boldest reformers struggled against hope, to patch up a reasonable compromise with the defeated and captive King. "That a treaty was entered into by Charles while at Hampton Court," says Forster,* "with the Generals Cromwell and Fairfax,—having for its basis his reinstatement on the throne, his surrender of his chief friends, his concession of every popular right, his wide and universal toleration of all matters of conscience, with, among other incidental conditions, the earldom of Essex, the garter, and the government of Ireland for Cromwell—is not disputed by any one; whether with any sincere purpose on the part of Cromwell, admits of most serious question; whether with any on the part of Charles certainly admits of none. Here, as in all matters where what he supposed the prerogatives of his crown came in question—Charles was hopelessly insincere. Mrs. Hutchinson would have us suppose that Cromwell and Ireton acted throughout in good faith, and were only turned against the King at last by the discovery of bad faith in him. 'To speak the truth,' she says, 'of all, Cromwell was at this period so uncorruptly faithful to his trust and to the people's interest, that he could not be drawn into the practice of his own usual and natural dissimulations on this occasion. His son-in-law, Ireton, that was as faithful as he, was not so fully of the opinion (till he found the contrary) but that the King might be managed to comply with the public good of his people after he could no longer uphold his own violent will; but upon some discourses, the King uttering these words to him, 'I shall play my game as well as I can,' Ireton replied, 'If your Majesty have a game to play, you must give us also the liberty to play ours.'' This would lead us to conclude, however, that Cromwell had never very favourably listened to the proposed treaty.

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 227.

"Ominous symptoms of distrust in both Cromwell and Ireton were speedily detected by the King's attendants. 'Being commanded,' says Ashburnham, 'by his Majesty to desire from Cromwell and Ireton that he might remove Stoake to one of his own houses, they told me (with very severe countenance) he should go if he pleased to Oatlands; but that they had met with sufficient proof that the King had not only abetted and fomented the differences between them and their enemies, by commanding all his party to take conditions under the (then) parliament and city, but that likewise he had (at that instant) a treaty with the Scots, when he made greatest profession to close with them: for the justification of which, they affirmed that they had both his and the Queen's letters to make it good, which were great allays to their thoughts of serving him, and did very much justify the general misfortune he lived under of having the reputation of little faith in his dealings.' And again, Ashburnham (whose intercourse with both Cromwell and the King was more free and unreserved than that of the other royal attendant, Berkeley) tells us that Cromwell, after the rejection of the proposals, professed himself still favourable to the King's restoration, but became more reserved and private; and that he and Ireton withdrew themselves by degrees from the freedom of their wonted discourses of his Majesty's recovery.

"Those proposals—noble, and liberal, and tolerant as they were—have been amply described and illustrated in the memoir of Marten. After their rejection, no doubt, Cromwell and Ireton felt the pressure of the army. From the memoirs of Berkeley, indeed, we distinctly learn that now the Lieutenant-General absolutely affected to consider himself in danger, and requested that Berkeley and Ashburnham would not repair so frequently and with so little disguise to his quarters. He still, indeed, declared his undiminished anxiety for an adjustment of all differ-

ences; imprecating on himself and his posterity the vengeance of heaven, if he were not sincere in his endeavours to serve the King in that particular; but, at the same time, did not conceal his apprehensions in regard to the inconstancy of the army.

"But now a decisive movement approached, which is thus curiously accounted for in the memoir prefixed to the State Letters of Orrery—better known by the name of Lord Broghill. It is a truly remarkable piece of secret history. 'One time, particularly,' says the writer, 'in the year 1649, when Lord Broghill was riding, with Cromwell on one side of him, and Ireton on the other, at the head of their army, they fell into discourse about the late King's death. Cromwell declared, that if the King had followed his own mind, and had had trusty servants about him, he had fooled them all. And further said, that once they had a mind to have closed with him; but upon something that happened, they fell off from their design again. My Lord, finding Cromwell and Ireton in good humour, and no other person within hearing, asked them if he might be so bold as to desire an account, 1st, Why they once would have closed with the King? and 2dly, Why they did not? Cromwell very freely told him he would satisfy him in both his queries. The reason, says he, why we would once have closed with the King, was this; we found that the Scots and the Presbyterians began to be more powerful than we; and if they had made up matters with the King, we should have been left in the lurch; therefore, we thought it best to prevent them, by offering first to come in upon any reasonable conditions. But while we were busied with these thoughts, there came a letter from one of our spies, who was of the King's bed-chamber, which acquainted us that on that day our doom was decreed; that he could not possibly tell what it was, but we might find it out if we could intercept a letter from the King to the Queen,

wherein he declared what he would do. The letter, he said, was sewed up in the skirt of a saddle, and the bearer of it would come with the saddle upon his head, about ten o'clock that night to the Blue Boar inn in Holborn, for there he was to take horse and go to Dover with it. This messenger knew nothing of the letter in the saddle, but some persons in Dover did. We were at Windsor when we received the letter; and immediately upon the receipt of it, Ireton and I resolved to take one trusty fellow with us, and with troopers' habits to go to the inn in Holborn; which accordingly we did, and set our man at the gate of the inn, where the wicket only was open, to let people in and out. Our man was to give us notice when a person came there with a saddle, while we, in the disguise of common troopers, called for cans of beer, and continued drinking till about ten o'clock: the sentinel at the gate then gave notice that the man with the saddle was come in. Upon this we immediately rose, and, as the man was leading out his horse saddled, came up to him with drawn swords, and told him we were there to search all that went in and out there; but as he looked like an honest man, we would only search his saddle, and so dismiss him. Upon that we ungirt the saddle, and carried it into the stall where we had been drinking, and left the horseman with our sentinel; then, ripping up one of the skirts of the saddle, we there found the letter of which we had been informed; and having got the letter into our hands, we delivered the saddle again to the man, telling him he was an honest man, and bidding him go about his business. The man not knowing what had been done, went away to Dover. As soon as we had the letter we opened it; in which we found the King had acquainted the Queen that he was now courted by both factions, the Scotch Presbyterians and the army, and which bid fairest for him should have him; but he thought he should close with the Scots

sooner than the other, &c. Upon this, added Cromwell, we took horse, and went to Windsor; and, finding we were not likely to have any tolerable terms from the King, we immediately, from that time forward, resolved his ruin.' "

The letter indeed decided Charles's fate. Lord Oxford, who had often seen the original letter, described it to Lord Bolingbroke as a reply to one from the Queen, wherein she had reproached him for promising to Cromwell the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland for life, the full control of the army there, and that he should have a garter, &c. To which the King returned answer, "Leave me to manage, who am better informed of all the circumstances than you can be; and doubt not but that I shall know in due time how to deal with the rogues, who instead of a silken garter, shall be treated with a hempen cord!" Such is believed to have been the final circumstance that decided Cromwell on attempting the settlement of England's hard-won liberties, without regard to the intractable inheritor of its crown.

Meanwhile the King was to have one other chance, and Cromwell was to fight one other campaign before this question of kingship's rights was finally settled in very stern judicial manner by the sovereign people. The second civil war commenced. Another Scottish army was raised, altogether different from the last; composed of covenanters and cavaliers united on no very definite principle or aim, but meanwhile resolved to rescue the King ftom the English sectaries. It was officered in the most imbecile manner. Its different sections scarcely attempted to co-operate together, and were defeated and scattered in detail by a force of far less than half their number, commanded by Cromwell, who here met once more, at the head of this unfortunate invasion, Sir Marmaduke Langdale, whom he had already beaten at Naseby. No possible good could result from such an attempt. It suffered

swift defeat, which Cromwell followed up with his wonted decision. He marched right on to Edinburgh, extinguishing every remnant of the party that the Duke of Hamilton had contrived to get into action, and restrained his soldiers with such admirable discipline, that he was welcomed at the Scottish capital as a deliverer from the machinations of the enemies of the Kirk. The Scottish nation had felt little sympathy with the movements of Hamilton. He had hastened prematurely to England, ill-provided, and with no security for any support in case of meeting with difficulties requiring co-operation or aid. This rash invasion was altogether hopeless under such circumstances, and with so experienced and daring a leader as Cromwell to oppose; and the result was that the whole scheme vanished on Cromwell's approach, like a rain cloud scattered by the wind. Meanwhile, the English Presbyterians, foreseeing their overthrow in the triumph of Cromwell, strove by every means to effect a division in their own favour. Negotiations were once more renewed with the King, who conceded nearly every point demanded by the parliamentary commissioners, though with his usual insincerity, planning all the while his escape, and encouraging every attempt at the restoration of his absolute power. "After having solemnly promised that all hostilities in Ireland should cease, he secretly wrote to Ormond (Oct. 10:) 'Obey my wife's orders, not mine, until I shall let you know I am free from all restraint; nor trouble yourself about my concessions as to Ireland; they will not lead to anything;' and the day on which he had consented to transfer to parliament for twenty years the command of the army (Oct. 9,) he wrote to Sir William Hopkins: 'To tell you the truth, my great concession this morning was made only with a view to facilitate my approaching escape; without that hope, I should never have yielded in this manner. If I had refused, I could, without much sorrow, have returned to my prison;

but as it is, I own it would break my heart, for I have done that which my escape alone can justify."*

The parliament had occasional hints of this perfidy, while the army were suspicious of both; and at length when the former were about to stifle their doubts, and close with the King as their last resource, the army stepped in; forcibly took the King from the Isle of Wight, and placed him under their own guard in Hurst Castle, on the main land, thereby rendering all further communication between the King and parliament impossible. On Monday, 4th December, 1648, the House of Commons debated for the last time the desperate question, whether his majesty's concessions were a ground of settlement; and on the following morning, in defiance of the known perfidy of the conceder, decided that they were, by a majority of forty-six. Anything seemed to them preferable to the triumph of the Independents. Neither the minority nor the army leaders, however, were prepared to sacrifice what they regarded as the whole fruits of their hard-won victories for any such insubstantial settlement. The worshippers of formulas exercised small influence indeed in their councils; and the very first step that followed was the famous sifting of parliament, known as Pride's Purge. The army had already marched to the capital, and in the quietest possible manner quartered itself wherever undisputed accommodation could be found. On Wednesday, the 6th of December, Colonel Rich's regiment of horse, and Colonel Pride's regiment of foot, displaced the city trainbands as a guard to the parliament. Colonel Pride himself, stood at the main entrance of the House of Commons with a list of the members of the House, sifted with earnest deliberation by the army chiefs and Independent leaders the night before. Near him was Lord Grey of Groby, and an usher of the House, and as each rejected member appeared, he was abruptly told by Pride, "You

* Guizot's History of the English Revolution, p. 396.

cannot enter!" Forty-one members were compelled to turn away in defiance of their indignant remonstrances. About a hundred in all were finally excluded. They could not even obtain a hearing from Pride, nor any answer to their repeated demands from all parties, "By what law, or shadow of legal pretence are we excluded." Hugh Peters, chaplain to General Fairfax, alone vouchsafed them an answer, as he entered among them with sword by his side, and such comfort as an army chaplain could bestow. "It is by the law of necessity," said he, "truly, by the power of the sword,"—an argument we shall return to the consideration of at a later period of our historical sketch. This very evening, while the excluded members are still under arrest, Lieutenant-General Cromwell came to town. The Presbyterian party were defeated; the minority was now become a decided majority, and could accomplish their aim. The proposals of the army were taken into consideration. The revolution approached its crisis; and at length petitions were received, which set forth that the King, who alone was guilty of so much bloodshed, should be brought to trial. On the 19th of December, 1648, a detachment sent from head-quarters, removed the King from Hurst Castle to Windsor. On the way Charles conversed earnestly with Major Harrison, whose prepossessing appearance and respectful manner, struck the King the more from his having been warned to beware of him as his intended assassin. At length the King told him of the rumours that had reached him. "Nothing can be more false," replied the republican officer; "this is what I said, and I can repeat it: it is, *that the law is equally obligatory to great and small, and that justice has no respect to persons.*" Though this was stated with marked emphasis, the King did not see in it anything to alarm him; he refused to avail himself of a fleet horse offered him by Lord Newburgh, with which he might escape from his escort; and when, in the evening,

he reached his old palace of Windsor, he seemed as delighted as if he had only retired there of his own free will, to enjoy a brief relaxation from the cares of royalty. That very day the Commons had voted that he should be brought to trial, and a committee already sat preparing his impeachment. The Lords had refused to join them, but this was no obstacle; they voted that the people being, after God, the source of all legitimate authority, the Commons of England, who represented them, possessed the sovereign power; and the High Court of Justice was forthwith instituted in the name of the Commons, consisting of one hundred and thirty-five commissioners, and began its memorable proceedings for the trial of Charles Stuart, King of England, accused as "a tyrant, traitor, and murderer."

Cromwell did not appear more openly in these proceed ings than many others of the leading statesmen and officers. That he exercised great influence and control over very many of them cannot be doubted; and once his mind was made up, his calm unwavering decision contributed largely towards the dignified and consistent course pursued by that unprecedented tribunal. When commissioners arrived from Scotland to protest against putting the King to death, and insisted on that clause in the Covenant by which all had sworn faithfully to preserve his Majesty's person, Cromwell met them on their own principles, and had clearly the best of the argument. As Burnet tells us, Cromwell first discussed the nature of regal power, forcing on them the principles of Mariana and Buchanan, with which they were familiar. "He said, as to their Covenant, they swore to the preservation of the King's person in defence of the true religion: if then it appeared that the settlement of the true religion was obstructed by the King, so that they could not come at it but by putting him out of the way, then their oath could not bind them to the preserving him any longer. He said

also, their Covenant did bind them to bring all malignants, incendiaries, and enemies to the cause, to condign punishment: and was not this to be executed impartially? What were all those on whom public justice had been done, especially those who suffered for joining with Montrose, but small offenders, acting by commission from the King, who was, therefore, the principal, and so the most guilty?"*

On Friday, the 19th of January, 1649, the King once more re-entered London, and took up his abode at St. James's Palace. On the following day the High Court had assembled for deliberation on the final arrangement of their proceedings, when it was announced that the King was at hand. Cromwell hastened to the window, and then turning round with a pale but animated countenance, exclaimed, "He is come! he is come! and now," he added with his accustomed ready foresight, "we are doing that great work that the whole nation will be full of, therefore I desire you to let us resolve here what answer we shall give the King when he comes before us; for the first question he will ask us will be, by what authority and commission we do try him." No one answered for a time; at length Henry Martyn said, "In the name of the Commons and parliament assembled, and of all the good people of England."

It is not necessary that we should describe minutely the trial of the King. For those who demanded what law could justify such a proceeding, this other question remained to be answered, "Was the King any less bound than his subjects to observe the laws solemnly assented to by himself and his predecessors?" The King had rejected all government by law, the only means by which irresponsibility could be secured to him, and having striven in vain to trample on all law, its assertors saw no wrong in meting to him the same measure of justice that had been awarded to many of his abettors. Nevertheless, it

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 261.



CHARLES I. PARTING WITH HIS FAMILY.—P. 134

was a courageous act of these men, the English regicides, meriting indeed to be called "perhaps the most daring action that any body of men to be met with in history, ever, with clear consciences, set themselves to do." French historians delight to draw flattering parallels between their own revolution and that of England in the seventeenth century; but there is in reality no parallel between the trials of Charles and Louis. Neither the victim nor the judges of France bore any resemblance to the high court and royal prisoner of England. In the former case, the sole crime of the imbecile monarch was his being born a king, while the judges were but the mouth-piece of a whole people driven for a time beyond control of justice or reason. Charles and his judges are altogether in contrast to this. A brave and haughty monarch had failed in his efforts, by policy or force, to establish absolute power on the ruins of all popular rights. With long-suffering patience, the popular leaders had striven to restore to his hand the sceptre, under such restrictions as should prevent its ever becoming a despot's rod; and when all faith in his promises or intentions became hopeless, they judged him, and doomed him as a traitor to the laws—well knowing that only a very small minority of that *sovereign people* in whose name they acted, dared to sympathize in such a deed.

We can scarcely now, by any effort, conceive how courageous, how horrible an act, was this condemnation of the King of England in the seventeenth century. Not many months before, when he was escorted from Newcastle a prisoner, newly delivered up by the Scots to the English commissioners, in proceeding southward eager crowds flocked to meet him, bringing with them persons afflicted with scrofula, or king's evil, that he might touch and cure them as he passed! The King was, in truth, a lesser divinity to the people of that age; it was not a mere extravagant figure of speech, when court divines

drew parallels between the *royal martyr's* death, and the crucifixion of our Saviour, blasphemous as it may now appear to most readers. The very men who judged and condemned Charles, trembled to carry their own sentence into execution; and from among the one hundred and thirty-five judges, only fifty-nine signatures could with great difficulty be procured to the fatal order. But the third of these is Oliver Cromwell—a man not likely to fear looking his own act in the face. On the 30th of January, 1649, Charles I., King of England, ascended the scaffold in front of Whitehall, and laying his head on the block, the executioner severed it at a blow. "This is the head of a traitor!" exclaimed the executioner, holding it up to the people; but they only answered with a groan. After the body had been removed, and placed in a coffin in one of the apartments of Whitehall, Cromwell sought the room where it lay, and influenced by emotions altogether unwonted and powerful, removed the coffin lid, and gazed on the dead body of the King. Imagination must picture to each reader the strange thoughts that chased each other then, as Cromwell gazed steadily, without any betrayal of outward emotion, on the calm and bloodless countenance of him whom he had faced in the council, on the battle-field, and at the judgment-bar. There is something deeply solemn in the sight of any dead body, the influence of which is felt even by the most thoughtless; but when it is that of one whom we have known, and with whom we have contended in the strife of passions, conscience searches with stern uncompromising rigour into the past, and challenges many an act that it had seemed to sanction, or to pass unreproved when it was done. In this solemn review, it may be that Cromwell once more interrogated the past, searching for evidence of upright motives and righteous ends, but the iron countenance of the triumphant general and statesman betrayed no sign of doubt or remorse to the guards. One of them, a



OLIVER CROMWELL VIEWING THE DEAD BODY OF CHARLES I.—P. 136

private soldier, interrupted his reverie by asking what government they should have now? "The same that there was," he replied hastily; and turning again to the body of the King, composedly remarked that it appeared sound and well-made for a long life.

While these momentous proceedings were being carried into execution, Cromwell found time, amid all the cares of state, to carry on domestic negotiations which also had their just importance in his estimation, showing, as Carlyle somewhat quaintly remarks, "how a lieutenant-general's mind, busy pulling down idolatrous kingships, and setting up religious commonwealths, has, withal, an idle eldest son to marry!" An idle, indeed, and very valueless man, Richard Cromwell; into whose incapable hands the Commonwealth fell in due course, and was set down again in much quicker time than it now took to set it up. These "small family matters," indeed, occurring as they do in the very heart of the momentous transactions we have been relating, afford very valuable help in forming our judgment of Cromwell. The reader will find them in Carlyle's "Letters and Speeches of Cromwell," as well as in Forster, and elsewhere; and if he keep in mind all the circumstances by which Cromwell was environed at the period, it will be strange if he discover no new light in them by which to judge of the man. On the 30th of January, 1649, as we have already narrated, Charles I. perished on the block. Kingly power was at an end for a time in England, and to the believers in Cromwell's baby-dreams of crowns, and his long-headed hypocrisy and ambition, here was one master-stroke struck home, one great obstacle removed, and the very moment come for deeper scheming and loftier aims; yet what is the very next work in which we find Cromwell engaged? On the 1st of February, only the second day after the consummation of that world-famous sentence and doom of Charles Stuart, King of England, Cromwell writes to "his very

loving friend, Mr. Robinson, preacher at Southampton," replying to the renewal of an old-proposed alliance, between Richard, eldest son and heir of the great General, and Dorothy, daughter of Mr. Mayor of Hursley, a zealous Puritan, the representative of an old family of good estate in Hampshire. "Upon your testimony," says he, "of the gentlewoman's worth, and the common report of the piety of the family, I shall be willing to entertain the renewing of the motion, upon such conditions as may be to mutual satisfaction." The reader of these letters might imagine, from the complicated discussions that follow, that Cromwell had been an idle country squire, with no other thought in his mind from morning to night than the fit wedding of his heir, and the due settlement of jointures, "pin-money," and all the important petty details of such family matters; yet what mighty events were transacting under his guidance and counsel at the moment! It was the very crisis of the revolution, so hardly achieved. English cavaliers, horror-struck and indignant—Scots Presbyterian royalists scarcely less infuriate—Irish Papist royalists and insurrectionists raging in demoniacal fury, and even continental powers threatening to step in and crush the infant Commonwealth;—itself in a state of perilous transition. Do we not see in this the calm self-possession, the iron nerve, of the man, who at this very crisis, (and while, as we discover, he was acting as President of the Council of State,) carried through these homely matrimonial negotiations with all the minuteness of a professional conveyancer, and saw his eldest son married to Dorothy Mayor a modest, unobtrusive, kind-hearted woman, in every way worthy to join the family circle presided over by Cromwell's noble mother and wife,—though surely no match to tempt the ambition of one who already grasped at the throne of England as an inheritance for his son! Judge, reader, if this man has really sold his soul to the tempter, and sees before him no other goal than a

despot's crown, for which he has plotted dark schemes, achieved bloody victories, coerced parliaments, cajoled politicians, and finally murdered a king? Others may believe this, if they can; for my part, I find it impossible.

CHAPTER XII.

THE IRISH CAMPAIGN.

On the 1st of May, 1649, Richard Cromwell and Dorothy Mayor were married in Hursley Church. On the 19th of the same month the following brief, but emphatic act, announced to the English nation what the wisdom of its councillors had devised for the time being as aptest and most expedient:—"Be it declared and enacted by this present parliament, and by the authority of the same: That the people of England, and of all the dominions and territories thereunto belonging, are and shall be, and are hereby constituted, made, established and confirmed to be, A Commonwealth or Free-State; and shall from henceforth be governed as a Commonwealth and Free-State,—by the supreme authority of this nation the representatives of the people in parliament, and by such as they shall appoint and constitute officers and ministers under them for the good of the people; and that without any King or House of Lords."*

The Commonwealth of England thus established, Cromwell was once more selected as the man fittest to cope with, and strangle at once, its most formidable antagonist. Charles II., as he was already called by his own adherents, had proved as pliable in an alliance with the Papists of Ireland, as he did very speedily after with the Covenanting Presbyterians of Scotland; and a formidable Irish insurrection and army of resistance, called for measures of

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 408.

the very promptest kind to put an end to it. Before Cromwell proceeded to his new field of action, however, he had another, and perhaps still more formidable insurrection to nip in the bud. Just while the Lieutenant-General was settling the disputed points of his son's marriage-settlement, and Dorothy Mayor was discussing with her bride's-maids her wedding dresses, intelligence is received of certain ominous extremes of republican excesses breaking out in the very heart of the Commonwealth's own army. The *Levellers*, as they were styled, aimed at community of goods, a paradisaical state of simplicity, and an immediate preparation for the beginning of the millennium—believed by them to be at hand;—one of the wildest off-shoots of the revolution. A sort of "Calvinistic Sans-culottism," as Carlyle styles it; or rather a sort of belligerent Quakerism; most inopportune and formidable at such a crisis. Cromwell set off in hot haste after these levellers, now headed by officers of some note, and spreading disaffection and mutiny through the army; by marches of forty and fifty miles a-day he pushed on through the midland counties; pounced unexpectedly on these levellers while some hundreds of them were quietly asleep in bed, fancying perhaps the General scarcely out of London yet; and this threatening mutiny was effectually *levelled;* rigorous court-martials, tempered by well-timed clemency, rooting out every vestige of the noxious weed. This done, Cromwell proceeded on his warlike visit to Ireland, where a horrible plot had been organized for blotting out the very name of Protestantism, and erasing every trace of English rule or occupation from the Irish soil. While England was busied with her own life-struggles, these plotters had found abundant opportunity for perpetrating their horrible schemes of vengeance. It was not as armies, but as hordes of savages, ever growing more maddened by the blood they spilled, that that wretched land was overrun. English Protes-

tants, men, women, and children, were stripped naked, and driven forth houseless in the depth of winter. "If, ashamed of their nudity, and desirous of seeking shelter from the rigour of a remarkably severe season, these unhappy wretches took refuge in a barn, and concealed themselves under the straw, the rebels instantly set fire to it and burned them alive. At other times, they were led without clothing to be drowned, and if, on the road, they did not move quick enough, they were urged forward at the point of the pike. When they reached the river or sea, they were precipitated into it in bands of several hundreds. If these poor wretches rose to the surface of the water, men were stationed along the brink to plunge them in again with the butts of their muskets, or to fire at and kill them. Husbands were cut to pieces in presence of their wives; wives and virgins were abused in the sight of their nearest relations; and infants of seven or eight years were hung before the eyes of their parents. Nay, the Irish even went so far as to teach their own children to strip and kill the children of the English, and dash out their brains against the stones. Numbers of Protestants were buried alive, as many as seventy in one trench. An Irish priest, named MacOdeghan, captured forty or fifty Protestants, and persuaded them to abjure their religion on a promise of quarter. After their abjuration, he asked them if they believed that Christ was bodily present in the host, and that the Pope was the head of the Church? and on their replying in the affirmative, he said, 'Now, then, you are in a very good faith;' and, for fear they should relapse into heresy, cut all their throats."*

Added to all this, there reigned the most hopeless diversity of council among these Irish insurgents, offering no prospect of this frightful scene of horrors coming to

* The Protector, a Vindication, p. 81.

an end. "The history of this war," says Carlyle,* "does not form itself into a picture; but remains only as a huge blot, an indiscriminate blackness; which the human memory cannot willingly charge itself with! There are parties on the back of parties; at war with the world and with each other. There are Catholics of the Pale, demanding freedom of religion; under my Lord This and my Lord That. There are Old-Irish Catholics, under Pope's Nuncios, under Abbas O'Teague of the excommunications, and Owen Roe O'Neil;—demanding not religious freedom only, but what we now call 'Repeal of the Union;' and unable to agree with the Catholics of the English Pale. Then there are Ormond royalists, of the Episcopalian and mixed creeds, strong for King without Covenant: Ulster and other Presbyterians, strong for King *and* Covenant: lastly, Michael Jones and the Commonwealth of England, who want neither King nor Covenant. All these plunging and tumbling, in huge discord, for the last eight years, have made of Ireland and its affairs the black unutterable blot we speak of."

These strange and discordant elements, united for once, on the establishment of the English Commonwealth, and demanded a Cromwell to dash them asunder and into fragments, ere more terrible massacre ensued. Already, according to the computations of different historians, from 50,000 to 200,000 Protestants, had perished in this Irish St. Bartholomew's massacre. In the midst of these scenes of indescribable horror, how delightful is the following letter, written "from aboard the John," where Cromwell is now quartered, waiting for a fair wind, as it seems, to carry him out of Milford Haven, and so to Ireland, from whence good news of success obtained against the Earl of Ormond, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, had already been received. It is addressed to "my beloved daughter, Dorothy Cromwell," and runs as follows:—

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 451.

"From Aboard the John, 13th August, 1649.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

Your letter was very welcome to me. I like to see anything from your hand; because indeed I stick not to say I do entirely love you. And therefore I hope a word of advice will not be unwelcome nor unacceptable to thee.

"I desire you both to make it above all things your business to seek the Lord: to be frequently calling upon him, that he would manifest himself to you in his Son; and be listening what returns he makes to you,—for he will be speaking in your ear and in your heart, if you attend thereunto. I desire you to provoke your husband likewise thereunto. As for the pleasures of this life, and outward business, let that be upon the bye. Be above all these things, by faith in Christ; and then you shall have the true use and comfort of them,—and not otherwise. I have much satisfaction in hope your spirit is this way set; and I desire you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and that I may hear thereof. The Lord is very near: which we see by his wonderful works: and therefore he looks that we of this generation draw near to him. This late great mercy of Ireland is a great manifestation thereof. Your husband will acquaint you with it. We should be much stirred up in our spirits to thankfulness. We much need the Spirit of Christ, to enable us to praise God for so admirable a mercy.

"The Lord bless thee, my dear daughter.

"I rest, thy loving father,

"OLIVER CROMWELL.

"P.S.—I hear thou didst lately miscarry. Prithee take heed of a coach by all means; borrow thy father's nag when thou intendest to go abroad."*

The reader, to understand the quiet undercurrent of

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p. 448.

loving charities that found room in the large heart of Cromwell, must study for himself his collected letters. It is not a mere chance expression of passing or assumed feeling, such as almost any parent might be expected, at some rare occasion, to adopt. A consistency in the strength of affection, and in the tone of feeling by which it is manifested, runs through the whole; showing no change, notwithstanding the vast diversity of the circumstances in which he stood at the various periods of his eventful career. Seems it not like the sweet calm of sunshine and summer flowers, as we pass on to such kindly interchange of love and parental solicitude, fresh from the judgment-hall of Westminster, the scaffold and the doom of Whitehall; and on the very eve of the Irish war—bloody and terrible as avenging fate!

A very general outline will suffice to convey to the reader an idea of Oliver Cromwell's Irish campaign. Distracted and hopelessly diverse as were the divisions of that unhappy kingdom, his plan for its restoration was simple, yet radical as the regimen of the surgeon for a mortifying limb. One scene will probably suffice to satisfy the reader, while it discloses to him proceedings of the Commonwealth general, which have been the subject of execration and horror to a certain class of writers ever since. That the reader, however, may be able to form a just opinion on the same subject for himself, it is requisite that he bear in remembrance meanwhile, what was then, and had been for years, the state of Ireland. Murder, pillage, conflagration, tortures, and cruelties of every kind, had deluged that green island with blood; and enacted in its smiling valleys, and in the name of Christ's religion, scenes scarcely paralleled in the tortures of the red Indian, or the hideous feasts of South Sea savages. It had seemed as if the land was peopled with tigers and wolves, rather than men. To this, at least, Cromwell's terrible retribution made swift enough end.

Fully three-fourths of the island was in the hands of the Earl of Ormond and his fierce adherents. His successes during the past year, while Cromwell had far other work on hand, had enabled him to recover nearly every place of strength in the kingdom. Cromwell selected for the object of his first attack, the town of Drogheda, or Tredah, as it was then styled. He completed his batteries in about twelve days, and then sent a summons to the governor to surrender. This rejected, he effected a breach in the walls on the following day, and stormed the town. Twice he saw his forces mount the breach, and each time they were driven back by the besieged, who included among them above 3000 of Ormond's best troops. On witnessing this, Cromwell placed himself at their head, and mounting the breach, in the very teeth of the enemy, he led on his men to victory. The garrison had thrown up three intrenchments within the walls, which they defended with desperate bravery, and even after they were driven from these, they maintained their stand in every street and lane, contesting every inch of ground with the courage of despair. The following is Cromwell's account of the merciless vengeance with which he swept over the devoted town. The reader will find no mincing of the matter. Whatever opinion we may form of it now, he seems to have anticipated no dissatisfaction or lack of sympathy on the part either of the Council of State, or the parliament of England, when he wrote to them of *the blessing of God on our endeavours at Drogheda.* He thus writes to the Speaker of the parliament :—" Upon Tuesday, the 10th of this instant, about five o'clock in the evening we began the storm : and after some hot dispute we entered, about seven or eight hundred men ; the enemy disputing it very stiffly with us. And indeed, through the advantages of the place, and the courage God was pleased to give the defenders, our men were forced to retreat quite out of the breach,

not without some considerable loss; Colonel Cassel being there shot in the head, whereof he presently died; and divers officers and soldiers, doing their duty, killed and wounded.

"Although our men that stormed the breaches were forced to recoil, as is before expressed; yet, being encouraged to recover their loss, they made a second attempt: wherein God was pleased so to animate them that they got ground of the enemy, and by the goodness of God, forced him to quit his intrenchments. And after a very hot dispute, the enemy having both horse and foot, and we only foot, within the wall,—they gave ground, and our men became masters both of their retrenchments and of the church; which indeed, although they made our entrance the more difficult, yet they proved of excellent use to us; so that the enemy could not now annoy us with their horse, but thereby we had advantage to make good the ground, that so we might let in our own horse; which accordingly was done, though with much difficulty.

"Divers of the enemy retreated into the Mill-Mount: a place very strong and of difficult access; being exceedingly high, having a good graft, and strongly pallisadoed. The governor, Sir Arthur Ashton, and divers considerable officers being there, our men getting up to them, were ordered by me to put them all to the sword. And indeed, being in the heat of action, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town: and, I think, that night they put to the sword about 2,000 men;—divers of the officers and soldiers being fled over the bridge into the other part of the town, where about 100 of them possessed St. Peter's Church-steeple, some the west gate, and others a strong round tower next the gate called St. Sunday's. These, being summoned to yield to mercy, refused. Whereupon I ordered the steeple of St. Peter's Church to be fired.

"The next day, the other two towers were summoned; in one of which was about six or seven score: but they refused to yield themselves: and we knowing that hunger must compel them, set only good guards to secure them from running away until their stomachs were come down. From one of the said towers, notwithstanding their condition, they killed and wounded some of our men. When they submitted, their officers were knocked on the head; and every tenth man of the soldiers killed; and the rest shipped for the Barbadoes. The soldiers in the other tower were all spared, as to their lives only; and shipped likewise for the Barbadoes.

"I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood; and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future. Which are the satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise cannot but work remorse and regret. The officers and soldiers of this garrison were the flower of their army.

"It is remarkable that these people, at the first, set up the mass in some places of the town that had been monasteries; but afterwards grew so insolent that, the last Lord's day before the storm, the Protestants were thrust out of the great church called St. Peter's, and they had public mass there: and in this very place near 1,000 of them were put to the sword, fleeing thither for safety. I believe all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously but two; the one of which was Father Peter Taaff, brother to the Lord Taaff, whom the soldiers took the next day and made an end of. The other was taken in the Round Tower, under the repute of a lieutenant, and when he undersood that the officers in that tower had no quarter, he confessed that he was a friar; but that did not save him."*

In another letter written on the same subject to the

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. 1. p. 460.

president of the Council of State, Cromwell remarks :— "This hath been a marvellous great mercy. I do not believe, neither do I hear, that any officer escaped with his life, save only one lieutenant, who, I hear, going to the enemy, said that he was the only man that escaped of all the garrison. The enemy upon this were filled with terror, and truly I believe this bitterness will save much effusion of blood, through the goodness of God."

Such is Cromwell's own explanation of the object he aimed at by so terrible a course. That it is an honest and true explanation, cannot admit of a doubt, for his worst reviler never charged him as naturally cruel or fond of blood; that he was justified in his anticipations, was amply confirmed by the results. Even his greatest maligners acknowledge that it ended the war and bloodshed almost at a stroke. "The execrable policy of that regicide," exclaims Carte, "had the effect he proposed. It spread abroad the terror of his name." It showed the insurgents in fact, that hope only lay in submission. Trim and Dundalk were immediately abandoned by the enemy. He passed on from town to castle, each opening their gates and submitting in terror to the conqueror. Wexford refused to yield—another storming and bloody vengeance ensued. One other, and very characteristic letter of the victorious General, in answer to proposals of surrender from Major-General Taaff, governor of Ross, will help the reader to a new view of Cromwell. The correspondence had been going on while the latter was breaching the walls; and his letters are as concise and pithy as his other arguments—with the sword. He thus replies to a letter accepting his conditions :—

"*For the Governor of Ross: These.*

"SIR, 19th October, 1649.

"To what I formerly offered, I shall make good. As for your carrying away any artillery or am-

munition, that you brought not with you, or that hath not come to you since you had the command of that place, —I must deny you that; expecting you to leave it as you found it.

"As for that which you mention concerning liberty of conscience, I meddle not with any man's conscience. But if by liberty of conscience, you mean a liberty to exercise the mass, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and to let you know, where the parliament of England have power *that* will not be allowed of. As for such of the townsmen who desire to depart, and carry away themselves and goods, (as you express,) I engage myself they shall have three months time so to do; and in the meantime shall be protected from violence in their persons and goods, as others under the obedience of the parliament.

"If you accept of this offer, I engage my honour for a punctual performance hereof. I rest,

"Your servant,

"OLIVER CROMWELL.*

Such will suffice to convey some clear idea of his Irish campaign—swift, bloody, yet merciful in its severity; above all decisive; putting an end by terrible means to a still more terrible state of things; and once more giving Ireland a chance of knowing the good of definite and intelligible government by law. This done, Cromwell appointed Ireton Lord-Deputy, and sailed for England to receive the appointment of General-in-chief of the armies of the Commonwealth, and to enter on another and a very different campaign.

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. i. p 477.

CHAPTER XIII.

WAR WITH SCOTLAND.

CROMWELL had made very speedy work of the suppression of the Irish rebellion, to which he was instigated no less by his conviction of its being the wisest, and even under all circumstances, the most merciful mode of procedure; but also by the many events that daily transpired tending to recall him to the great arena of political warfare in England. "We serve you," he wrote in one of his despatches from Ireland, " we are willing to be out of our trade of war, and shall hasten, by God's assistance and grace, to the end of our work, as the labourer doth to be at his rest." The end of Cromwell's work and trade of war, however, was not yet arrived. On reaching England he found that he was only exchanging one scene of foreign warfare for another, of an equally complex, and much more irritating character. The Scots, as we have seen, were the first to originate revolt against despotic sway and enforced conformity throughout the British isles ; nor had anything transpired to make them less resolute in resisting such aggressions. They had re-established Presbytery in Scotland well nigh to the satisfaction of the whole nation; they had entered into solemn league with England, on the very ground of their oft approved Covenant, and doubted not but they should soon see that nation as unanimous in the adoption of their favourite ecclesiastical polity as themselves. Presbytery, however, was from the first an exotic in England; and even when its leaders seemed to have the power, their enactments were only carried into partial force in one or two districts under their own immediate influence. Something very different from the establishment of any single dominant and absolute

form of ecclesiastical polity; on the ruins of episcopacy, was aimed at by the English nation; and while it may be true enough that the Independent party was only a small minority, even when it compelled England to submit to its views, it nevertheless represented in the practical working out of freedom of conscience and liberal institutions, much of that at which the great majority of the nation had long been aiming, however imperfectly their views were expressed. Perfect unanimity therefore, between Scotland and England had become impossible; and now while the latter was establishing a Commonwealth, and remodeling her ancient institutions to republican forms, Scotland had patched up an agreement with Charles, the son of the beheaded king, who thenceforth became, in name at least, the King of Scots. The Scots, as Carlyle very happily expresses it, compelled poor Charles to sign their Covenant voluntarily; an arrangement, however, which interfered very little with the King's negotiations with Cavaliers, Prelatists, Papists, and even the Pope himself. "Totally unscrupulous," says Hallam,* "as to the means by which he might reign, even at the moment that he was treating to become the covenanted King of Scotland with every solemn renunciation of Popery, Charles had recourse to a very delicate negotiation, which deserves remark, as having led, after a long course of time, but by gradual steps, to the final downfall of his family. With the advice of Ormond, and with the concurrence of Hyde, he attempted to interest the Pope (Innocent X.) on his side, as the most powerful intercessor with the Catholic princes of Europe. For this purpose it was necessary to promise toleration at least to the Catholics. The King's ambassadors to Spain in 1650, Cottington and Hyde, and other agents despatched to Rome at the same time, were empowered to offer an entire repeal of the penal laws. The King himself, some time afterwards, wrote a letter to the

* Hallam's Constitutional History vol. ii. p. 336.

Pope, wherein he repeated this assurance. That court, however, well aware of the hereditary duplicity of the Stuarts, received his overture with haughty contempt. The Pope returned no answer to the King's letter; but one was received after many months from the General of the Jesuits, requiring that Charles should declare himself a Catholic, since the goods of the Church could not be lavished for the support of an heretical prince. Even after this insolent refusal, the wretched exiles still clung, at times, to the vain hope of succour, which as Protestants and Englishmen they could not honourably demand. But many of them remarked too clearly the conditions on which assistance might be obtained. The court of Charles, openly or in secret, began to pass over to the Catholic Church; and the contagion soon spread to the highest places."

Such a covenanted king as this was plainly no better for the Scots than Sinbad's old man, in the Arabian tales. Shackle and burden enough he was likely to prove, but as a leader he was useless; and it was the misfortune of the Scottish nation at that period that no really eminent man existed among them. David Lesley, indeed, the commander-in-chief of the army, was a brave and experienced soldier, and if left entirely to his own judgment might have changed the fortunes of Cromwell at that critical period. But instead of being left like Cromwell with absolute command, and with an efficient executive behind, content to supply him with needful means, and leave the rest to his experienced courage and zeal; he was hampered in his movements with committees, with councillors, advisers, and meddlers of all sorts, ending as usual in discomfiture and total defeat.

Very different were Cromwell's dealings with the Presbyterians of Scotland, from the destroying fury with which he had so recently swept over Ireland and crushed down the spirit of opposition and revolt. He acted towards the

Scots as towards honest but misguided friends, estranged from him by misunderstanding and ignorance. Many of the Scottish leaders had availed themselves of the recent reports from Ireland, to fill the minds of the peasantry with the utmost horror of the English invaders, as monsters ready to perpetrate every conceivable cruelty on women and children; but Cromwell soon dissipated these rumours. He issued proclamations addressing the people of Scotland as fellow-Christians, and demanding of them if they had not already proved what his soldiers were when they penetrated to the Scottish capital only three years before. At the same time the most rigid discipline was established in the army, and the utmost care taken in all dealings with the peasantry to confirm in them an opinion of their friendly inclinations. Cromwell treated them all along as old allies, whose objects were still fundamentally the same with his own, and whom he would gladly win over to friendly co-operation, and interchange of good services. Cromwell pushed on to Edinburgh, in the neighbourhood of which Lesley had established his head-quarters, and thrown up a strong line of defences between Edinburgh and Leith, by which he secured both from attack. Cromwell, though much inferior in numbers, strove to bring on a general engagement, which Lesley seemed resolved, if possible, to avoid; and persisted in acting on the defensive. Cromwell again and again shifted his ground, repeatedly falling back, and then returning to take up his station on some commanding point near the town. Lesley in truth was too much hampered by governing committees to be very able for any decisive act of aggression; and the resolute exclusion of all *malignants* or *engagers*—in other words all who had already fought for the late King, or aided Hamilton in his recent engagements — had led to the substitution of very inexperienced officers for many of those Lesley had been accustomed to rely upon. They had placed in command, says

Sir Edward Walker, for most-part, ministers-sons, clerks, and others, who hardly ever before had even seen a sword. In such circumstances Lesley's passive resistance was clearly the best, and by this means Cromwell was for the time held at bay, completely defeated in the object of the campaign, and at last obliged to fire his huts and fall back on Dunbar.

The ancient town of Dunbar is built on the top and steep side of a bold rocky promontory jutting into the German Ocean. It offered to Cromwell the advantages of a sea-port, by means of which provisions might be sent him, and where he could perhaps establish winter quarters. It had the disadvantage, however, of being a narrow peninsula. Lesley, who had so long lain on the defensive, followed hard in pursuit so soon as he saw Cromwell had fairly turned his back. During two days and nights he hung close on the English rear; and when the English army entered Dunbar, on the evening of Sunday, the 1st of September, 1650, Lesley's soldiers were already taking up their position on the neighbouring hills; all Scotland behind them; and only this little neck of land in Oliver's possession. Nothing to all appearance could be more forlorn and hopeless than the position of Cromwell. Lesley had only to throw up works there similar to those he had so long defended between Edinburgh and Leith, and the invaders had no choice but to surrender, or escape by their transports in the face of the enemy's forces. Cromwell himself describes the position of Lesley as one "where ten men to hinder are better than forty to make way." He evidently anticipated the worst. He wrote off to Sir Arthur Haselrig, Governor of Newcastle, telling him the desperate state in which his army then lay, and warning him to be in readiness to act, whatever became of them. "The enemy," he writes, "lieth so upon the hills that we know not how to come that way without great difficulty; and our lying here daily consumeth our men, who fall sick

beyond imagination. I perceive your forces are not in a capacity for our present release. Wherefore, whatever becomes of us, it will be well for you to get what forces you can together, and in the south to help what they can. The business nearly concerneth all good people. . . . The only wise God knows what is best. All shall work for good. Our spirits are comfortable, praised be the Lord,—though our present condition be as it is; and indeed we have much hope in the Lord; of whose mercy we have had large experience." The brave Ironsides were evidently faint at heart from the extremity to which they were reduced. On Monday night a council of war was held, the schemes of which showed the desperate state of their position. It was proposed to embark the foot, and attempt to force a passage for the horse through the enemy's ranks, but the high wind and surf along that rugged coast, forbad even this desperate expedient. Hope, however, did not forsake Cromwell. With the strong faith in special providences, so frequently manifested by the men of that age, he found in his very weakness a ground of reliance on God, believing "that because of their advantages, because of their confidence, because of our weakness, because of our strait, we were in the Mount, and in the Mount the Lord would be seen, and that he would find out a way of deliverance and salvation for us." This strong faith of Cromwell in the hour of danger is well deserving our consideration in judging of his character. To some it may appear enthusiasm, or even fanaticism; it certainly at least is not hypocrisy. He, it is evident, clearly believed in it, whatever we may do. "He was a strong man," says Underwood, one of his own attendants, who knew him well; "in the dark perils of war, in the high-places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire, when it had gone out in all the others." At three o'clock on the morning of the 3d of September, Cromwell ordered a strong reconnoitering party to push on

towards the right, with the ostensible object of commanding the only pass in that quarter across the broad gully, in the bottom of which runs the Brook, a brawling rivulet, then swollen with rain, which finds its way from the Lammermoors to the sea. In this movement Cromwell was also actuated by the hope of tempting the enemy from his position on the neighbouring heights; and the result proved his masterly foresight and penetration. Suddenly he observed a general movement among the enemy's forces along the surrounding hills; and watching them closely with his glass, he found that Lesley was moving towards the right, and bringing his whole force down into the plain. This false move is generally said to have been the result of the indiscreet zeal of the Scottish clergy, who attended the army, and who compelled Lesley to make this precipitate attack under the apprehension that "the sectaries" were about to effect an escape along the coast. The evidence for this charge, however, is too imperfect to free the Scottish General from the blame of thus rashly flinging away all the advantages of a position that promised to starve the enemy into a surrender, or to drive them in disgrace to their transports. When Cromwell saw the Scottish spears glittering along the slope of the hills, as they moved in the grey dawn of morning down towards the ravine in his front, he exclaimed exultingly to the officers that stood by him, "*The Lord hath delivered them into our hands!*" A story, says Carlyle, "which nobody is in the least bound to believe." It bears, however, a perfect air of credibility; and agrees so well with his previous words, and his own despatches after the battle, that we cannot see why it should be questioned. Lesley was in fact bearing down with his right wing on Cromwell in such a way, that the great disparity of numbers on the part of the English, was compensated by their being able to attack the advancing force, while their rear, and the main body of the Scottish army, were shut out from the possibility of assisting them

by the nature of the ground. Cromwell in fact attacked the Scottish wing, front and flank, with an overpowering force; drove back their cavalry while many of the infantry were still lying on the wet heath, where they had passed the night amid wind and rain, without any covering; and such was their complete and total rout, that the greater part of the horse fled in desperate panic right over their own infantry, trampling hundreds to death, and more effectually routing the Scottish army than any attack of the enemy.

The greater part of Lesley's army never came into action. Bewildered and terror-stricken, they fled in every direction, scarcely knowing whither or why they were in hot retreat. The morning sun burst on a scene of horrible confusion and massacre. Thousands already lay dead on the field; thousands of fugitives covered it on every side. Captain Hodgson, an English officer, relates, that Cromwell rode up in the rear of his regiment, and commanded them to move more towards the left, where the Scots were already falling into disorder. As he spoke, the broad disk of the sun rose above the level ocean to his left, and Cromwell, as if inspired by the dawn of mighty triumph, exclaimed exultingly, "Now let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered."

The word of Lesley's army was *The Covenant*, but it was scarcely heard in the grey mists of that dread morning. That of Cromwell's was *The Lord of Hosts*, and, shouting exultingly the inspiriting cry, they pursued till the leaguers of the Covenant were shivered into utter ruin, as chaff before the wind. By nine o'clock in the morning, General Lesley had re-entered Edinburgh, a fugitive, whither Cromwell speedily followed, laid siege to Edinburgh Castle, compelled it to surrender, and held Scotland almost entirely at his mercy. He spent nearly the whole winter in Edinburgh, and strove to convince the Scots of the honest intentions of the English parliament, and their agreement

with them in all the main points of faith and doctrine. At this time, a dangerous attack of ague, brought on by exposure to the rigours of a particularly severe Scottish winter, seemed to threaten the life of the victorious general. It was only after months of protracted suffering, and several relapses, that he at length rallied, to the great gratification of many who afterwards regarded him as the betrayer of his country's liberties. One can hardly indeed fail to reflect on this incident, and conceive how universal would have been the feeling of regret at the time, and how manifold the bewailing of after historians, at the loss of almost the only man who then exhibited the capacity and genius requisite for the leader of the people at a period of such commotion and turbulence. Cromwell recovered from his dangerous illness only in time to take the field once more against another army, which before he and they fairly met, had become, strangely enough, composed of cavaliers and covenanting Presbyterians, headed by Charles II., King of Scots, whom the approach of the English general had, more than all the arguments of Scottish divines, speedily induced, to sign not only the Covenant, but even an open testimony against his father's sins. Well might Cromwell demand, in the queries he sent to the Scottish clergy after the battle of Dunbar, how they could "pretend to cry down all malignants, and yet receive and set up the head of them, and act for the kingdom of Christ in his (Charles Stuart's) name,"—a strange enough name indeed, under which to forward the kingdom of Christ. The new Scottish army, amounting once more to a numerous and effective force, gathered in the neighbourhood of Stirling, where they occupied a commanding position, that seemed to hold the key of the north of Scotland; while the Committee of Estates held their sittings in the town of Stirling. Cromwell, finding there was little prospect of forcing this new army from their intrenchments. while they continued to obtain

ready and abundant supplies from their rear, resolved by an act of the most daring skill, to dislodge the enemy from their well-chosen ground. With this view he transported his army across the Firth of Forth, and after a siege of only two days, succeeded in capturing Perth. The Scottish King and leaders now found their supplies almost wholly cut off; and nothing but barren highlands between them and their old victors, who had so suddenly outflanked them. Scotland seemed no longer to offer to Charles or his most influential followers any chance of a safe asylum; and it was resolved by them, in opposition to the more cautious advice of Argyle and others of the Scottish leaders, to march directly into England, and, trusting to the co-operation of the loyal majority of the English nation, to strike at the heart of the Commonwealth itself. The movement has been generally stigmatized by historians as rash and ill-judged; it was, however, perhaps as bold and likely a chance as could have been tried under the circumstances. It was a desperate attempt, indeed, since it hazarded all on a single engagement; but with the grounds they had for believing that many in England who detested the act of the regicides would gladly second so promising a movement, and with the certainty that Cromwell's victorious army must speedily fall on their rear, if they remained where they were, one sees not any better step they could have chosen.

Marching accordingly by Biggar, Charles pushed on southward, and entered England by Carlisle, on the 6th of August, 1651, having indeed crossed the Border almost before Cromwell could send word to his scattered forces of the necessity for their re-assembling. No English royalists or Presbyterians, however, joined the Scots King's standard. Weary and disheartened, they pushed onward, summoning towns and garrisons, with no friendly response, and scattering royal proclamations with equally fruitless results. Cromwell, meanwhile, had written to London,

encouraging them to put away fear, and collect such forces as they could, to hold the invading army in check, until he could overtake them. At Warrington, Charles received the first notice of this counter-movement, by having to contest the passage of the bridge with a party of the Commonwealth army, under Lambert and Harrison. This gained, he forsook the London road, turned aside towards Worcester, and there, on the 22d August, —anniversary of his father's unpropitious erection of his standard at Nottingham nine years before—he once more unfurled the royal banner, and gathered to his aid a few adventurous and disaffected gentry of the neighbourhood. This was all the King of Scots had gained by changing the battle-field to England. The Earl of Derby, indeed, joined him, but only as a wounded fugitive, Colonel Lilburn having cut off the whole body of his followers, as they moved to Worcester; and now Cromwell was pushing on rapidly behind them, and gaining important accession to his numbers from the counties he passed through. Lilburn, Lambert, Harrison, and other leaders, were all converging towards the same point, in obedience to Cromwell's summons, and while the citizens of London anticipated the entry of the Scottish army every hour, and the boldest among the leaders of the Commonwealth trembled at the crisis, the genius of Cromwell had again triumphed over every difficulty. The Scottish army amounted only to 14,000 men, but they had again taken up nearly an impregnable position, defended by the river Severn, and the commanding site of the city of Worcester. Bridges had been broken down, every height occupied, and the line of the Severn rendered, as it seemed, an impassable barrier. It had need to be so, for Cromwell had already collected an overwhelming force of above 30,000 men, which by the 22d of August were gathered along the left bank of the Severn, separated alone by the intervening river from the invaders' entrenchments.

The genius of Cromwell took in at a glance the advantages of the enemy's position, and the means by which they were to be overcome. A bridge which crossed the Severn at Upton, some miles below Worcester, had been broken down, but by means of one of its parapet walls which still stood, Lambert sent across some of his men, and with their assistance reconstructed a passable bridge. By means of this he threw a body of men across the river, drove back the enemy's outposts, and made good his position; and here he was soon after joined by Fleetwood, with upwards of 10,000 men. The river Team, however, a tributary of the Severn, flowed still between this body of Cromwell's forces and the ground they must occupy ere they could attack the enemy's position. But Cromwell knew how to avail himself of his superior numbers. Careless of the seeming danger of thus being compelled to force a junction with the divisions of his own army across broad rivers, in the sight of a strongly intrenched foe, Fleetwood was commanded to prepare a bridge of boats at the mouth of the Team, while Cromwell had already collected a sufficient number of boats, and other implements, with which to bridge across the Severn itself. On the evening of the 2d of September, 1651, Cromwell had completed the preparations for this arduous exploit. His spirits rose in anticipation of the struggle of the morrow that was to determine the fate of three kingdoms, as it had done in the grey mists of morning on the field of Dunbar. The morrow, indeed, was what he called his FORTUNATE DAY, the anniversary of that great victory.

At early dawn on the 3d of September, both Cromwell and Fleetwood were busily engaged in restoring the communications across the Severn and the Team; while Charles and some of the Scottish leaders watched their position and movements from one of the towers of the Cathedral. There, after long delay, the poor King saw

Fleetwood at length force his way across the Team, and attack the Scots at a great advantage, while Cromwell also, completing his bridge across the Severn, led the van in person, and joined against the foe in overwelming numbers. Reinforcements of horse and foot were despatched by Charles to the point of attack, but his able enemy was more than a match for him in numbers, as well as in skill and experience. The Scots fought with the most desperate bravery; resisting every inch of ground; intrenching themselves within hedges and other natural covers which the ground afforded, and doing all that dogged valour could achieve for purchasing success; but it was vain. The rivers once passed, Cromwell's superior numbers left the Scots no hope; yet they maintained the strife for five hours of as desperate fighting, Cromwell writes, as ever he had seen. The main body of the Scottish infantry held Cromwell in check for three hours on one spot, but his Ironsides broke through the wearied phalanx at last, and scattered them before their overwhelming assault. Colonel Drummond held out the King's fort, and refused to surrender to the victors; but they stormed it in the flush of victory, and put fifteen hundred of the enemy whom they found there to the sword. Charles fled, after a vain attempt to rally his troops, and found refuge at length in the Royal Oak: sword and sceptre had that day fallen from his grasp. It was indeed a memorable day for England, under whatever light we view it. "The dimensions of this mercy," writes Cromwell to the parliament, "are above my thoughts: it is for ought I know a crowning mercy." The covenanted King was no more, with all his solemn promises and oaths. When Charles returned again it was to add infamy to a royal name, which till then had kinged it proudly even in oppression.

Thenceforth Cromwell's battle-fields were at an end. The untarnished sword of the victorious General was sheathed for the last time on that proud battle-field.

England's armed foes no longer existed, and her great General must now return to reap for England, if it might be, some harvest from all this sore travail and strife. Cromwell's battle-fields were at an end, but not his battles. It has been well said by Vaughan,* in his character of Cromwell, that a less amount of ability than was necessary to meet the exigencies of his position, would have sufficed to govern half the nations of Europe in that age.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISMISSAL OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

WITH the sheathing of Cromwell's sword after the battle of Worcester, an altogether new, and more difficult warfare falls to be investigated and described by his biographer. Most men can appreciate the skill and the bravery of the indomitable leader at Naseby and Dunbar, or the genius of the victor at Worcester, even although their sympathies are with his opponents. But the bloodless warfare of political adversaries, and the strategy by which power is achieved, and cabal and plotting overreached, are more difficult to appreciate, and admit of a diversity of opinions, depending as much on the light in which we view the evidence, as on the facts it may disclose. With the defeat of the Scottish forces at Worcester, armed resistance to the republic was at an end. The reception of the King of Scots there, showed how utterly the royalist and Presbyterian parties were extinguished or laid prostrate. Order and voiceless submission in Ireland, proved with what terrible power Cromwell had quenched the spirit of rebellion, and grasped once more the reins of government in a mailed hand. In Scotland too, firmness, tempered by a severe justice, secured submission,

* Protectorate of Cromwell, vol. i. p. 106

and at length contentment with the Commonwealth rule. The most prejudiced Scottish writers acknowledge that justice had never before been so impartially administered as under the judges of the Commonwealth. "There was good justice done," says Burnet, "and vice was suppressed and punished, so that we always reckon those eight years of usurpation, a time of great peace and prosperity." Nicoll, the old diarist, a contemporary authority, sufficiently prejudiced against "that tyrannous usurper," as he styles Oliver Cromwell, to be received as an impartial witness on the same side, remarks:—"to speak truth, the Englishers were more indulgent and merciful to the Scots, than were the Scots to their own countrymen and neighbours, as was too evident; and their justice exceeded the Scots in many things, as was reported. They also filled up the rooms of justice courts with very honest clerks and members of that judicatory."* The General Assembly, indeed, was not suffered to sit, and restraints were put upon those who threatened to convert the pulpit, like the church courts, into a political engine. Nevertheless, the freest toleration, which was compatible with the existence of Commonwealth rule, was extended to the Scottish clergy; and they learned somewhat better to appreciate it, when the rejoicings for a "blessed restoration" drew to a close, and their "most religious and gracious king," the old covenanted King of Scots, Charles II. gave them a Dalziel and a Claverhouse, in exchange for the discarded judges of the Commonwealth.

Meanwhile victory had declared for the banner of the Commonwealth no less in foreign, than domestic warfare. Admiral Blake had won for it the sovereignty of the ocean, and had subdued alike the despotic and haughty monarchs of Spain and Portugal, and the powerful Dutch republic. All things united to prove that a great nation

* Nicoll's Diary, (Bannatyne Club,) p. 104.

had awoke to a sense of its own rights, and of its power to compel their concession. But with these rights won, a far more difficult task remained, which must ever test the sagacity and the genius of revolutionary leaders. When Charles, by his lawless oppression, and his faithlessness, had driven the people to rebellion, unity of purpose was secured by the necessity of the case. Little reasoning was needed to tell them that the object to be attained was the subjugation of Charles and of the maintainers of his absolute power, and, while that remained to be accomplished, all minor differences disappeared. Even so, when Irish massacres, or Scottish or Dutch invasion, were the dangers threatened, even the royalist of England could share with the republican in the triumph of victory. But when Cromwell returned to London after Worcester fight, this state of things was nearly at an end. The victory, indeed, was achieved, but its fruits remained to be secured. The government was merely provisional; avowedly but an expedient for the moment of danger; and the attempt at its settlement on a permanent footing, opened a field for all the minor shades of difference that had been before forgotten in the grand struggle between power and popular rights. In the steps that succeeded this, Cromwell took a leading part; and here it is that biographers have discovered the culminating point of his history, the season of change, the arena of hypocrisy, wherein he tarnished all his laurels; and where, therefore, his honest biographers who have followed him thus far, hasten to abandon him as perjured, dishonoured, and false to every principle for which he had before contended. The ablest of all this class of biographers is Forster. After describing the great ends achieved by the vigour and the genius of the republican statesmen of England at this period, that writer thus describes their position as the leaders of England, and the fatal errors which he conceives they committed at so important a

crisis:—"The government under which these results had been achieved, and by which alone the frame of things was now kept together, was avowedly a provisional government. It rested on no direct authority from the people. The men who were at the head of affairs had, by sublime talents and unconquerable energy, placed *themselves* there; but in continuing to hold to office by no other bond, they seemed to confess that the people were against them. Daring and resolute in all things else, they fell short of their own high souls in this. It was because in other things they held their personal safety to be risked alone; while in this they saw some peril to that grand design by which, as they fondly hoped, they were destined to secure the happiness of unborn generations of their countrymen. We alone, they reasoned, to whom this glorious republic owes its birth, are fit to watch over its tender years. Our duty cannot be done, till we have taught England the practical blessings of the new system we have wrought. Under a republic she shall find herself greater than under any of her kings. Wealthy and secure, respected and honoured, she will recognise the value and the potency of the government we have formed; and, by her gratitude well repaid, we may then with safety deliver back into the hands of the people the authority we have wielded throughout for their benefit alone.

"The reasoning, up to a certain point, must possibly be conceded as just, and worthy of the men. There cannot be a doubt, that at the day when the axe descended on the neck of Charles I., a majority of the people were still strongly attached to the forms of monarchical government. But on the other side were a most formidable minority, comprising within itself the greatest amount of energy, genius, and moral force, that had yet been exhibited upon the stage of public affairs in England. To elevate the whole nation to that standard, was a design at once grand and simple, worthy of the age, and of the deeds

already done in it. For, be it kept in mind, republicanism was of recent growth even in the breasts of these founders of the new republic. The most influential of them, had not played the lofty part they did from any preconceived notion of the abstract excellence of that form of civil society. What such men as Vane sought, was popular and good government; embracing extensive representation, security for person and property, freedom of thought, freedom of the press, and entire liberty of conscience. It was only because they could not find these under a monarchy, that they became republicans; but under a monarch they would have been content with these. From the head of no Jupiter sprang the armed republic of England; but even from the weak and faithless head of her own Charles Stuart. Practical and most protracted experience of the utter impossibility of bringing that monarch to terms of good faith, destroyed, in the breasts of a formidable minority of the nation, all further faith in monarchy itself. It only remained, by means as powerful, to wean the rest from that old allegiance and long-descended love, by exhibiting to them in enlarged prosperity, safety, and honour, the superior forces that were inherent in the republican form. Hence it came to be urged as no less a matter of necessity than of duty, to hold fast by the act which Englishmen who have read the history of their country aright know to be the corner-stone of all the freedom that now exists in it, and which declared the parliament that assembled in 1640 indissoluble, save by its own consent. By such a course only, in the midst of the clouds that hung over the minds of men after the memorable action of the 30th of January, was it felt that even the common frame of society could be held together. Only so, could the chance, however distant, of another trial of the family of Stuart, be averted from the land which they had cursed so heavily. By this alone could that calm be cast upon the troubled waters out of which

order and happiness must ever rise. But it was a course which in any case carried along with it one most peremptory condition. Justified by necessity alone—the limits of necessity sternly bound it in. The day that saw it no longer essential to safety, saw it the most fatal instrument of danger.

"That day had, now at last, arrived. The first act of the statesmen of Westminster, after the Worcester victory, should have been the passing of their bill for an amended representation, and the dissolution of the parliament in which they sat. In the restless anxiety of the thoughtful Vane, which followed close upon that event, might be detected the fear that there had already been a delay too long. No merely administrative glory, however great and brilliant, can be expected to produce a lasting beneficial impression on the minds or the condition of a people. The government of the new form had now brought to a successful issue its struggle for existence: scattered or prostrate enemies on all sides bore witness to the solid foundations it had laid. The next, the greatest, and most serviceable stone of the superstructure, should have been a fearless appeal to the people. More was to be gained, as events will show hereafter, by trusting than by distrusting *them*. They had now, moreover, the indisputable right to demand—what such a course was only the first step to—new political institutions, such as Vane's later experience inculcated, to be founded on the principles of the old, and in which should be kept, as far as it was possible, the spirit of those fundamental laws and usages to which they had been for centuries accustomed, and under which, in their purer shapes, they had grown in civilization and in virtue. Assuming, on the other hand, the injustice of such demands, and the inexpediency of granting them, what was the single security left to the new Commonwealth, even in the midst of all its triumphs? Nothing but the sword that had struck for them. No-

thing but the force which, obedient to an impulse from without, might as readily answer to a bidding from within. Here lurked the danger that was mightiest, because least seen. The serpent that had the deadliest sting for the new Commonwealth lay coiled and cherished within its own bosom. Every màn in that army which now rested, after its loftiest and last triumph, within a few days' march of London, should have been made, in his very first hour of consciousness of victory, to feel that his sword had at length become useless, for that higher duties awaited its gallant owner. The great invitation of citizenship should have pierced like a trumpet into every tent—*You have won the privileges of freemen. Come now, and actively participate in them!*" *

These reflections, containing as they do many wise and just inferences, altogether consistent with the theory of abstract justice and popular rights, nevertheless involve also a practical fallacy striking at their very root, and leading to the consideration of one of the most difficult problems that remains to be solved by the leaders of every popular movement. The surest and the safest guarantee of national liberty and equal justice is undoubtedly to be found in a popular representative government, and the more widely the intelligence and education of the people renders it prudent to extend the elective franchise, the broader and safer is the basis on which popular government rests. It is not, however, because of the intelligence of the people, and their fitness to determine with statesman-like wisdom and impartiality every question that demands legislation, that such a popular mode of representative government becomes the best; but mainly because the self-interest, which is the basis of all political partisanship, is the best guarantee for such a system securing the interests of the people. A representative government, unless under the most extravagant forms of

* Forster's Life of Cromwell vol, ii. p. 2

extreme republicanism, implies the choice of wise and able men, fit to decide on the difficulties that arise in the course of practical legislation, not mere mouth-pieces of the electors to give form to every popular impulse. But while even in the calmest periods of history, it frequently occurs that the wise statesman must take upon himself to determine what are the best interests of the people, there are critical periods wherein the excited multitude, driven hither and thither like a team of affrighted horses, can only find safety in some man of powerful genius who seizes the reins and guides their course. Such a critical period was that we have now to consider, and however suitable an appeal to the popular voice might have been for checking the levying of ship-money and other illegal imposts, and for regulating the whole question of taxation, it seems very doubtful indeed how far such an appeal was likely to have given stability to the government. The overturning the despotism that had threatened to abolish even the name and forms of constitutional government had been the work of a bold and able minority; while the genius of Cromwell, from first to last, secured the triumph of their armies. By all who view their cause as the cause of liberty, Cromwell must be regarded as, up to this period, the saviour of his country. He was a man influenced by human passions; capable of being swayed by ambition, love of power, and self-interest, like all other men; but no sufficient evidence has ever been produced to give weight to the charges of double-dealing and hypocrisy with which he is loaded. He was one of the foremost to join the popular party, and that step taken, he fearlessly and consistently employed the swiftest means to control and to overturn their opponents. He negociated as long as any of that party with the King, but once satisfied of the impossibility of placing any reliance on the engagements entered into with Charles, he dealt with him as with any other man; set him aside,

judged and condemned him, declared the crown forfeited, rooted out rebellion in Ireland, put down opposition in Scotland and England, and returned to London after the "crowning mercy" of Worcester, with the honest exultation of a conqueror and a king. From this time it is most probable that Cromwell looked forward to the supreme power being vested in his own hands. Somewhat of human ambition no doubt mingled with such anticipations, but still more of a conviction of the necessity for this arrangement. It was in fact the grand principle of "the tools to him who can handle them." That consciousness of power which genius ever possesses is perfectly compatible with true modesty. Death had removed in succession Pym, Hampden, Ireton, and other able and virtuous men, who might have claimed an equal or a very large share in the supreme government; one sees not who was left behind to dispute the right of its assumption with Cromwell. God sends us kings whether we will own them or not; and here was the king of his age, whom Milton ever looked up to with lofty admiration, but in whom the small men of that and succeeding times have discerned only the creature of sordid passions, who betrayed the cause of his country and posterity, that he might fit the straitened crown of James and Charles Stuart on his ample brow.

Soon after Cromwell resumed his seat in parliament "The Debate Touching a New Representative," or in other words, the question of the long parliament closing its sittings and making way for another, was revived. Forster stigmatizes this as a wily blow; but, as a parliament, it clearly needed to be brought to a close since it had exchanged its older name for that of the *Rump*, being, in fact only a self-constituted and provisional government, formed of a small minority of the members of Charles's last parliament. The following is Forster's account of the proceedings of Cromwell for the settlement of the

government on a permanent basis:—"On the 10th of December, Cromwell summoned and held a meeting, at the Speaker's house, of those friends, military and civil, who were supposed to be well affected towards his own political views. The two or three honest men who attended must have been startled at the question first propounded there; but the majority of the meeting had few natural emotions to thrust in the way of anything that either honesty or dishonesty might propose. They were lawyers chiefly; and Whitelocke, one of them, has happily left on record some detail of what passed.

"The ground which Cromwell took in addressing these assembled gentlemen was,—'that now the old King being dead, and his son being defeated, he held it necessary to come to a settlement of the nation;' and, in order thereunto, 'he had requested this meeting, that they together might consider and advise what was fit to be done, and present it to the parliament.' By what pretension, it may be asked, could a servant of the republic thus presume to call its stability in question? It is clear that, in the mere act of doing it, he was guilty of treason to the government then existing, and of which he was himself a member. Whitelocke tells us, that a 'great many' were at the meeting . . . 'divers members of parliament, and some chief officers of the army.' But Bradshaw would not attend, nor Vane, nor Marten, nor Scot, nor Blake, nor Harrington. Ludlow, by the wily craft of Cromwell, was in a sort of honourable banishment in Ireland, and what once was the habitation of the soul of Ireton, lay a senseless clod on that distant shore. The meeting was obviously summoned in defiance of the council of the Commonwealth.

"The Speaker of the House of Commons opened the conference. 'My lord,' he said, addressing Cromwell, 'this company were very ready to attend your excellency; and the business you are pleased to propound to us is very necessary to be considered. God hath given mar-

vellous success to our forces under your command; and if we do not improve these mercies to some settlement, such as may be to God's honour, and the good of this Commonwealth, we shall be very much blameworthy.' Hereupon, one of the few honest men who were present, but who was not more honest than gullible, Major-General Harrison, interposed a few words, which are enough to express the delusions already widely spread among the republican officers as to the possibility of erecting a democracy of saints on the ruins of civil authority. 'I think,' he remarked, 'that which my lord-general hath propounded, is to advise as to a settlement, both of our civil *and spiritual liberties*; and so that the mercies which the Lord hath given unto us may not be cast away. How this may be done is the great question.' And now much might have arisen from this of a very awkward bearing on the designs of Cromwell, had it not been for the lucky interposition of that most grave and accomplished lawyer, the Lord Commissioner Whitelocke. 'It is a *great question*, indeed,' he observes, 'and not suddenly to be resolved; yet it were a pity that a meeting of so many able and worthy persons as I see here should be fruitless. I should humbly offer in the first place, whether it be not requisite to be understood in what way this settlement is desired, *whether of an absolute republic, or with any mixture of monarchy?*' This was, to use a homely expression, hitting the nail on the right head, and accordingly, with equal force and promptitude, Cromwell followed up the blow. 'My Lord Commissioner Whitelocke,' he exclaimed, '*hath put us upon the right point.* It is, indeed, my meaning that we should consider whether a republic, or a mixed monarchical government, will be best to be settled; and,' he added, with that careless air which so often veiled the profoundest workings of ambition in him, '*if anything monarchical, then in whom that power shall be placed?*'

"The discussion thus fairly launched, the various

speakers embarked in it without further hesitation. Sir Thomas Widdrington (who was in so far honestly disposed to monarchy, that he had resigned the commission of the great seal upon the passing of that memorable vote which should have brought the ingenious gentlemen debaters within the penalties of treason) at once, with much candour—a great deal too much for Cromwell—thus tendered his opinion: 'I think a mixed monarchical government will be most suitable to the laws and people of the nation; and if any thing monarchical, I suppose we shall hold it most just *to place that power in one of the sons of the late king*.' Cromwell betraying some uneasiness at this, his friend Colonel Fleetwood, who afterwards married the widow of Ireton, and was a man of reasonable but not very strong inclinations to a republic, advanced to his relief, and again generalized the discussion after this vague fashion: 'I think that the question, whether an absolute republic, or a mixed monarchy, is best to be settled in this nation, will not be very easy to be determined.' Upon this, the Lord Chief Justice, Oliver Saint John, offered a remark of much general force, and no particular application, which was all the better for his great cousin and confidant Cromwell: 'It will be found,' he said, 'that the government of this nation, *without something of monarchical power*, will be very difficult to be so settled as not to shake the foundation of our laws, and the liberties of the people.' The Speaker chimed in with this:—'It will breed a strange confusion,' he remarked, 'to settle a government of this nation, *without something of monarchy*.' He had scarcely made the remark, however, when a thoroughly honest man, of short-sighted zeal, but most sincere purpose, turned round to St. John, and put this startling question: 'I beseech you, my lord, why may not this, as well as other nations, be governed in the way of a republic?' The Lord Commissioner Whitelocke made reply to it: 'The laws of England are so interwoven with

the power and practice of monarchy, that to settle a government without something of monarchy, would make so great an alteration in the proceedings of our laws, that you have scarce time to rectify, nor can we well foresee, the inconveniences which will arise thereby.' Most shallow, learned, and lawyer-like reply!

"The only other man who seems to have spoken with an appearance of honesty, rose after it had been delivered, and frankly observed that it was unintelligible to him. 'I do not,' added Colonel Whalley, 'well understand matters of law; but it seems to me the best way, *not to have anything of monarchical power* in the settlement of our government; and, *if we should resolve upon any, whom have we to pitch upon?* The King's eldest son hath been in arms against us, and his second son is likewise our enemy.' If Whalley here intended, however, (for his close relationship to Cromwell, and his subsequent crawling subservience to him, cannot fail to induce suspicion,) merely to narrow the question of a kingly successor to some great man taken from the people—as it is clear that Cromwell throughout the meeting desired—Widdrington foiled the attempt by this earnest and honest proposition: 'But the late King's third son, the Duke of Gloucester, is still among us, and too young to have been in arms against us, or infected with the principles of our enemies.' Whitelocke, upon this, as if to shift the question once more to some point of general disagreement, and so relieve the uneasiness of Cromwell, revived one of the old proposals. 'There may,' he said, 'be a day given for the King's eldest son, or for the Duke of York, his brother, to come into the parliament; and, upon such terms as shall be thought fit and agreeable, both to our civil and spiritual liberties, a settlement may be made with them.'

"Cromwell, however, who had been restless and dissatisfied as these latter views were urged, here interposed, with a statement of some force and brevity and obviously

designed to wind up the conference. '*That*,' he said, in reference to Whitelocke's last remark, 'will be *a business of more than ordinary difficulty;* but, really I think, if it may be done with safety and preservation of our rights, *both as Englishmen and Christians*, THAT A SETTLEMENT WITH SOMEWHAT OF MONARCHICAL POWER IN IT WOULD BE VERY EFFECTUAL.'"*

With much more candour and impartiality Hallam remarks, in commenting on the same interview:—"A train of favouring events, more than any deep-laid policy, had now brought sovereignty within the reach of Cromwell. His first schemes of ambition may probably have extended no farther than a title and estate, with a great civil and military command in the King's name. Power had fallen into his hands because they alone were fit to wield it; he was taught by every succeeding event his own undeniable superiority over his contemporaries in martial renown, in civil prudence, in decision of character, and in the public esteem which naturally attached to these qualities. Perhaps it was not till after the battle of Worcester that he began to fix his thoughts, if not on the dignity of royalty, yet on an equivalent right of command. Two remarkable conversations, in which Whitelocke bore a part, seem to place beyond controversy the nature of his designs. About the end of 1651, Whitelocke himself, St. John, Widdrington, Lenthall, Harrison, Desborough, Fleetwood, and Whalley, met Cromwell, at his own request, to consider the settlement of the nation. The four former were in favour of monarchy, Whitelocke inclining to Charles, Widdrington and others to the Duke of Gloucester; Desborough and Whalley were against a single person's government, and Fleetwood uncertain. Cromwell, who had evidently procured this conference in order to sift the inclinations of so many leading men, and to give some intimation of his

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 17

own, broke it up with remarking, that, if it might be done with safety and preservation of their rights as Englishmen and Christians, a settlement of somewhat with monarchical power in it would be very effectual."*

I doubt not that in much of this Cromwell was feeling his way, and scarcely anything could have more tended to confirm him in the necessity there was for his assuming the reins of government, than such a discussion between "honest republicans, of short-sighted zeal but most sincere purpose," and such legal formalists as these sticklers for somewhat of monarchical government. One sees not, indeed, where such divided councils could have ended otherwise than in a "glorious restoration," which came so soon as these men were left to the settlement of affairs, but happily not until Cromwell had schooled them with a teaching unknown before, the fruits of which we are now reaping. Forster, it has been seen, in his zeal for the remnant of the long parliament, stigmatizes this consultation by Cromwell with some of the ablest of men of his time, for the permament settlement of the government as *treason to the republic.* Nothing could more effectually evince the strong prejudice with which that very able biographer of the statesmen of the seventeenth century has allowed his judgment to be warped in forming an opinion of the protectorate of Cromwell. The idea indeed is positively ridiculous. The republic owed its very existence to Cromwell, and he surely, more than any other man had a right to consult as to its future safety. This I imagine most men will concede, whatever conclusion they arrived at, either as to his sincerity in such consultations or his honesty and patriotism in the use he made of them.

The army was Cromwell's stronghold, as it had before proved, under the guidance of Colonel Pride, the effective abettor of the Independent party. It is folly how-

* Hallam's Con. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 321, 322.

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ever to look upon it as a mere tool in Cromwell's hands, and therefore to regard his government as similar in source to that of the military emperors of Rome, or the despotic ruler who crowned himself emperor of France. The army was then a party of the people, including a large mass of the virtuous middle classes, who had taken up arms from no mercenary motive. The Presbyterian party in London had complained long before that it contained many who had not signed the Covenant; it came after a time to include very few who approved of any such signature. It was in fact the Independent party, in arms; a critical enough state of things, but yet by no means the worst that could have occurred; it was a body of the people who conceived that they did not forfeit the privileges of citizens merely by having assumed arms in defence of popular liberty. And even the Presbyterians had but little reason to complain, for the Independents undoubtedly conceded to them a liberty of conscience which would hardly have been granted by them had they obtained the power. Backed by such supporters, Cromwell, on the 20th of April, 1653, dismissed the last remnant of the famous long parliament of England, thereby annihilating, at a blow, as many conceive, the hard-won liberties of England. Before considering whether such was really the case we shall give the account of this celebrated event in the words of the able biographer from whom we have already so frequently quoted.* "'Yesterday,' says the Lord Commissioner Whitelocke, writing on the fatal 20th of April, 'there having been a great meeting at Cromwell's lodgings in Whitehall, of parliament men, and several officers of the army, sent to by Cromwell to be there, and a large discourse and debate having been amongst them, touching some expedient to be found out for the present carrying on of the government of the Commonwealth, and putting a period to this

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii p. 56.

present parliament: it was offered by divers as a most dangerous thing to dissolve the present parliament, and to set up any other government, and that it would neither be warrantable in conscience, or wisdom so to do; yet none of them expressed themselves so freely to that purpose as Sir Thomas Widdrington and Whitelocke then did. Of the other opinion, as to putting an end forthwith to this parliament, St. John was one of the chief, and many more with him; and generally all the officers of the army, who stuck close in this likewise to their general. And the better to make way for themselves, and their ambitious design of advancing them to the civil government as well as they were in the military power,—they and their party declared their opinions, 'that it was necessary the same should be done one way or other, and the members of parliament not permitted to prolong their own power.' At which expression, Cromwell seemed to reprove some of them; and this conference lasted till late at night, when Widdrington and Whitelocke went home weary, and troubled to see the indiscretion and ingratitude of those men, and the way they designed to ruin themselves.'

"Cromwell subsequently grounded a complaint of insincerity against Whitelocke and his friends on the alleged circumstance of their having left the meeting on this famous night with an express understanding that the leaders of the House of Commons would suspend all further proceedings on the act for dissolution and a new representative, till the result of the conference of next day. But if Whitelocke gave such a pledge, which his entire silence on that head renders at least doubtful, he did so without authority, and in the absence of any means of redeeming it. The course which Vane held at present had been deliberately chosen by that determined man, and it would have demanded a more than human power to induce him, for any consideration left upon the

earth, to peril by another hour's delay the popular claim to popular rights delayed already to the endangerment of liberty. The whole of the 19th of April, so spent, as we have seen, at Whitehall, in consultation between the lawyers, temporizers, and traitors, was passed by Vane at Westminster, in resolute amendment of the details of the bill which was at once to close the existence of the greatest parliament that had ever sat within the walls of the old chapel of St. Stephens, and to call into life throughout England the greatest amount of representative freedom that had yet been enjoyed by her people. And never surely did sun arise on a loftier or more honourable strength of purpose in the breast of any man, than that which, early on the morning of the 20th of April, sustained Sir Henry Vane, as he passed into the House of Commons to strike his last blow for the sacred cause to which, from earliest youth, and in resistance to all temptations, his life had been devoted with a touching constancy. The same hour of the same ever-memorable morning saw Whitelocke and his friends on their way to Cromwell's house.

"Therefore, proceeds the memorialist in continuation of the passage already quoted, 'these came early again this morning, according to appointment, to Cromwell's lodging, where there were but a few parliament men, and a few officers of the army. A point was again stirred, which had been debated the last night, 'whether forty persons, or about that number of parliament men and officers of the army, should be nominated by the parliament, and empowered for the managing the affairs of the Commonwealth, till a new parliament should meet, and so the present parliament to be forthwith dissolved.' Whitelocke was against this proposal, and the more, fearing lest he might be one of these forty; who, he thought, would be in a desperate condition after the parliament should be dissolved; but others were very am-

bitious to be of this number and council, and to be invested with this exorbitant power in them. Cromwell being informed during this debate that the parliament was sitting, and that it was hoped they would put a period to themselves, which would be the most honourable dissolution for them; hereupon he broke off the meeting, and the members of the parliament left him at his lodging and went to the House.'

"Vane, Marten, Algernon Sidney, and others of the chief men, had been there some time, and had succeeded in forcing to its final stage the act for the new representative. Some of Cromwell's creatures had also shown themselves early in their places, with a view to watch the proceedings for him, and interpose the forms of the House, if necessary, for the purpose of giving time and room to his designs. Thus, when Vane rose to urge the necessity of passing the bill into a law at once, one of these convenient gentlemen was despatched, as we have seen, to interrupt the debate at Cromwell's lodgings; while another, no less than Major-General Harrison himself, rose with the dignified purpose of talking against time, and 'most sweetly and humbly' conjured the members assembled to pause before they took so important a step as that which Vane recommended The warmth and earnestness of Vane's reply were the signal for a second messenger to Cromwell, and Ingoldsby was observed to leave the House in some haste and excitement.

"The Cromwell section of officers were still in consultation with Cromwell himself at the lodging of the lord general. The first news of the morning had broken off what might be called the negotiatory part of the meeting; but the military cabal had resumed their private councils, when Ingoldsby's sudden appearance in the room, with the excitement upon him of the great scene he had left, again interrupted their discussions. 'If you mean to do any thing decisive,' he exclaimed to Cromwell, 'you have

no time to lose.' Cromwell rose hastily, commanded a party of soldiers to be marched round to the House of Commons, and left the room without another word. Lambert and 'five or six' of the more determined officers followed him. The rest remained sitting where they were, in wonder, uncertainty, and dread.

"Cromwell made no pause till he stood before the door of the House of Commons. Here he planted a body of soldiers, stationed another in the lobby, and led round some files of musketeers to a position without the chamber where the members were seated. His manner, at this momentous instant, was observed to be calm, and his very dress was noted for its peaceful contrast to his purposes. Vane had again risen, and was speaking on the dissolution-bill, in a passionate strain, when he quietly appeared at the door, 'clad in plain black clothes, with grey worsted stockings,' quite unattended and alone. About a hundred members were at this time present. He stood for a moment on the spot at which he entered, and then 'sat down as he used to do in an ordinary place.' Here he was instantly joined by his kinsman Saint John, to whom he said, with inexpressible humility of manner, that "he was come to do that which grieved him to the very soul, and that he had earnestly prayed to God against. Nay, that he had rather be torn in pieces than do it; but there was a necessity laid upon him therein, in order to the glory of God, and the good of the nation.' Saint John answered, that 'he knew not what he meant; but did pray, that what it was which must be done, might have a happy issue for the general good.' With this, that crafty lawyer, went back to his own seat, to wait the issue of all those dark intrigues in which he had himself played so prominent a part.

"Vane still held on unflinchingly to his great purpose. He urged, with increased earnestness, the necessity of proceeding at once to the last stage of the bill, and with

that view adjured them to dispense with even the ceremony of engrossing, and other immaterial forms. Cromwell, at this, beckoned Harrison, 'Now is the time,' he said to that enthusiast, 'I must do it!' Harrison's answer would imply that he knew the meditated outrage, but felt the force of the eloquence of Vane. 'The work, Sir,' he said, after advising him to consider, 'is very great and dangerous.' 'You say well,' hastily retorted Cromwell, and 'sat still for another quarter of an hour.' It would then seem that Vane had succeeded in his purpose, for the Speaker had actually risen to put the question, when Cromwell started up, 'put off his hat,' and began to speak. 'At first,' Lord Leicester tells us, 'and for a good while, he spoke in commendation of the parliament, for their pains and care of the public good; but afterwards he changed his style; told them of their injustice, delays of justice, self-interest, and other faults;' charging them, according to Ludlow, with 'not having a heart to do any thing for the public good,' and accusing them 'of an intention to perpetuate themselves in power, had they not been forced to the passing of this act, which he affirmed they designed never to observe.' But, he added, with a violent and harsh abruptness, 'Your time is come! The Lord has done with you! He has chosen other instruments for the carrying on His work, that are more worthy.' All this seemed nothing less than inspiration to his fanatical followers. They marked the extraordinary changes in his voice and manner, as new births of Providence within him, and exclaimed that it was the Lord had taken him by the hand, and set him on to do that thing. Plainer men saw the tyrant only, the slave within the grasp of tyrannous ambition. 'He spoke,' says Ludlow, 'with so much passion and discomposure of mind, as if he had been distracted.'

"Meanwhile Vane had risen, Wentworth and Marten too, 'but he would suffer none to speak but himself' At the

same time, as if himself astonished at the unprecedented part he was playing, he cried out to those who had risen, 'You think, perhaps, that this is not parliamentary language; I know it.' In spite of all resistance, however, the voice of Sir Peter Wentworth, who stood up by the side of Vane, forced itself at last upon the House. He declared, that this was indeed 'the first time that he had ever heard such unbecoming language given to the parliament, and that it was the more horrid, in that it came from their servant, and their servant whom they had so highly trusted and obliged, and whom, by their unprecedented bounty, they had made what he was.' Whether these words really transported Cromwell, on the instant, beyond the bounds of even his self-command, or merely rendered necessary a further display of what his deluded followers might take to be genuine inspiration, the reader will best judge from what actually followed, as an honest eye-witness has delivered it to us.

"Cromwell instantly thrust his hat down upon his head, sprang from his seat into the centre of the floor of the House, and shouted out, 'Come, come, I'll put an end to your prating.' Then, adds Lord Leicester, on the relation of Algernon Sidney, 'he walked up and down the stage or floor in the midst of the House, with his hat on his head, and chid the members soundly, looking sometimes, and pointing particularly, upon some persons, as Sir B. Whitelocke, one of the commissioners for the great seal, and Sir Henry Vane, to whom he gave very sharp language, though he named them not, but by his gestures it was well known he meant them.' But even while he raved and chafed in this desperate fashion, ('walking up and down,' Ludlow tells us, 'like a madman, and kicking the ground with his feet,') Vane succeeded in making himself once more heard. At this Cromwell stopped and called Vane by his name. 'You,' he said, 'might have prevented this extraordinary course; but you are a jug-

gler, and have not so much as common honesty.' 'I have been forced to this,' he continued. 'I have sought the Lord, night and day, that he would rather slay me, than put me upon the doing of this work. But now begone. You are no parliament. I say, you are no parliament! I'll put an end to your sitting. Begone! Give way to honester men.' Stamping his foot, as he spoke thus, very heavily on the floor, the door was flung open suddenly, and he stood in the midst of 'five or six files of musketeers,' with their arms ready!

"In that moment," adds Forster "perished the rights in whose name twelve years of the miseries of civil war had been unrepiningly encountered,—'making vain and viler than dirt the blood of so many faithful and valiant Englishmen, who had left their countrymen in this liberty of parliament, bought with their lives.' It is needless to say that resistance, to any successful end, was idle; yet not without such resistance as might serve to enter their immortal protest with posterity did these lion-hearted republicans leave the scene (now degraded and profaned) of their yet glorious and undying triumphs. 'Then the General,' pursues Lord Leicester, 'pointing to the Speaker in his chair, said to Harrison, 'Fetch him down.' Harrison went to the Speaker, and spoke to him to come down; but the Speaker sat still, and said nothing. 'Take him down,' said the General; then Harrison went and pulled the Speaker by the gown, and he came down. It happened that day that Algernon Sidney sat next to the Speaker on the right hand. The General said to Harrison, 'Put him out;' Harrison spake to Sidney to go out; but he said he would not go out, and sat still. The General said again, 'Put him out.' Then Harrison and Worsley (who commanded the General's own regiment of foot) put their hands upon Sidney's shoulders, as if they would force him to go out. Then he rose and went towards the door. Then the General went to the table where the

mace lay, which used to be carried before the Speaker, and said, 'Take away these baubles;' so the soldiers took away the mace.'

"While this extraordinary scene of violence proceeded thus, the majority of the members had gradually withdrawn; and now, as the more eminent men, who had waited to the last, moved slowly towards the door, through files of musketeers drawn up on either side, they received to the last, in passionate insults from Cromwell, the tribute which their defence of the Commonwealth had well merited from the lips of its destroyer. Nicknames were flung in the face of each. Challoner was pointed to as a drunkard; Sir Peter Wentworth was accused of adultery; alderman Allen of embezzlements; even poor Whitelocke of gross injustice; and as the Lord General's old friend Harry Marten passed, he was asked if a whoremaster was fit to sit and govern. Among the latest of all came Vane; and as he came, he once again protested 'in a loud voice' against the fatal scene which had been acted. 'This is not honest,' he said. 'Yea—it is against morality and common honesty.' At this instant, it is possible Cromwell felt some shame. He paused, as though to rally himself with the recollection of some personal or private vice he might fling against his great rival, but when he spoke, his harsh voice had a troubled tone, and he merely uttered the few words that have become so memorable, 'Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane—*the Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!*' No vice would stick, even as a lie, against the virtue and simplicity of the most spotless statesman in our annals. Vane passed on, and no nickname followed him.

"Cromwell was now virtually lord of England, and stood with a heavier and more daring foot upon her neck than had ever been placed there by any of her kings. 'He seized,' says Ludlow, 'on the records that were in the House, and at Mr. Scobell's; after which he went to the



CROMWELL DISMISSING THE LONG PARLIAMENT.—P. 136

clerk, and snatching the act of dissolution, which was ready to pass, out of his hand, he put it under his cloak, and having commanded the doors to be locked up, went away to Whitehall.'

"The officers he had left were still sitting together when Cromwell reappeared, flushed and excited as they had always seen him after victory, and, flinging on the table before them the key of the House of Commons, (the 'bauble' had been tossed into the outer room,) told them all that he had done. 'When I went there,' he added, 'I did not think to have done this. But perceiving the Spirit of God so strong upon me, I would not consult flesh and blood.'"

Whether in that moment perished the rights which had been purchased by twelve years of the miseries of civil war, admits of very decided question. Much stress is laid on the incorruptible integrity of Vane; but it was not integrity or incorruptibility alone that was needed at such a crisis. It was the ability to govern—a pilot who was not only honestly desirous of guiding the good ship through the breakers, but who was well able so to do. The first French revolution affords an ever-memorable example of such a crisis becoming inevitable, and yet waiting in vain for a leader to direct the movement. Our own poet Wordsworth, comparing the English patriots of the seventeenth century with the foremost Frenchmen of that time, exultingly exclaims :—

> Great men have been among us; hands that penned
> And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none:
> The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
> Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
> These moralists could act and comprehend:
> They knew how genuine glory was put on;
> Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
> In splendour: what strength was that would not bend
> But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
> Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
> Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!

No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

The comparison is well merited. Guizot, with the natural partiality of a Frenchman, considers that, *previous to the French Revolution*, that of England was the greatest event which the annals of Europe had to narrate. Since then, and even while we are writing, he himself has become the victim of a third Revolution, which has driven Louis Philippe from the throne of France, and proscribed the ministry that acted under that historian's leadership. Possibly he now regards the Revolutions of France in a less flattering light. It is worthy of notice, however, that the very term *incorruptible*, which so fitly applies to "the most spotless statesman," Sir Harry Vane, is that by which the Frenchman, Robespierre, is most usually described;—no master-spirit, as history has long since decided.

Cromwell alone proved himself the master-spirit of his age, who, with clear-sighted genius, looked beyond the outward forms, and discerned the spirit of those things for which they had been striving. To set up in opposition to his practical sagacity the mere honesty of his opponents is to waive the whole point in question. The fifth-monarchy men, who anticipated a reign of saints, and an immediate millennium, were fully as honest as the most zealous advocates of classic republicanism; and pretty work both of them made of it, so soon as no Cromwell remained to guide their course. The accusations of dishonesty and hypocrisy have so long stood in contact with Cromwell's name, that it will require more than ordinary clearness in the evidence ere many be disabused in the belief. Yet to those who study it, Cromwell will be found to have spoken out his intentions very clearly all along. Even in the meeting already described, which took place in the Speaker's house on the 10th December, to an unprejudiced reader, he must appear to have revealed his

opinions with very little circumlocution or concealment. Still more so is his candour apparent in the following instances; in which, however, Forster only discovers evidence of his fierce contempt for the popular pretences on which he had first trusted. Henry Nevile, a virtuous and exemplary man, thus described a scene which preceded the dismissal of the parliament.* "'Cromwell upon this great occasion, sent for some of the chief city divines, as if he made it a matter of conscience to be determined by their advice. Among these was the leading Mr. Calamy, who very boldly opposed Mr. Cromwell's project, and offered to prove it both unlawful and impracticable. Cromwell answered readily upon the first head of unlawful, and appealed to the safety of the nation being the supreme law. 'But,' says he, 'pray Mr. Calamy, why impracticable?' Calamy replied, 'Oh! 'tis against the voice of the nation, there will be nine in ten against you.' 'Very well,' says Cromwell, 'but what if I should disarm the nine, and put a sword into the tenth man's hand, would not that do the business.'' The next scene, with the same moral, took place on a different theatre, with actors somewhat different, and is told by an anti-republican of uncompromising fierceness. 'The next scene of this applauded comedy,' he writes, so characterizing a tragedy, fraught with the lives of thousands of living men, and with the liberties of unborn millions, 'was laid at the cockpit, by Whitehall, where Cromwell, concealing the number of the beast in his apocalypse, declared to his council of officers, 'that, if they should trust the people in an election of a new parliament, according to the old constitution, it would be a tempting of God; and that his confidence was, that God did intend to save and deliver this nation by few, as he had done in former times; and that five or six men and some few more, setting themselves to the work, might do more in one day than the parliament had or would do in

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 52

a hundred, as far as he could perceive; and that such unbiassed men were like to be the only instruments of the people's happiness.'"

All this seems not only characterized by candour, but what is of equal moment to the present argument, by sound reasoning. The majority of the parliament plainly anticipated that, could they get the bill passed, they would thereby give the force of law to their own schemes, and stamp them with a peculiar sacredness, as the first-fruits of the revolution. By it too, their own continuance as a part of the new body was secured, and even, as it appears, their control over the admission of their colleagues. It seems evident, moreover, that they were garbling even the defective measure they professed to have in hand, mangling and dismembering it in a way worthy of Charles himself. This charge Cromwell brought against them in his address to the first Assembly, and in the presence of many whose silence attested its accuracy. "They told us they would take time for the consideration of these things till to-morrow; they would sleep upon them, and consult some friends; though, as I said, there were about twenty-three of them here, and not above fifty-three in the House. And at parting, two or three of the chief of them, one of the chief, and two or three more, did tell us, that they would endeavour to suspend farther proceedings about their bill for a new representative until they had another conference with us. And upon this we had great satisfaction, and had hope, if our expedient could receive a loving debate, that the next day we should have some such issue thereof as would give satisfaction to all. And herewith they went away, it being late at night. The next morning, we considering how to order what we had farther to offer to them in the evening, word was brought us that the House was proceeding with all speed upon the new representative! We could not believe it, that such persons would be so unworthy; we remained there, till a

second and a third messenger came with tidings that the House was really upon that business, and had brought it near to the issue, and with that height as was never before exercised; leaving out all things relating to the due exercise of the qualifications, (which had appeared all along in it till now;) and meaning, as we heard, to pass it only on paper, without engrossing, for the quicker despatch of it.—Thus, as we apprehend, would the liberties of the nation have been thrown away into the hands of those who had never fought for it. And upon this we thought it our duty not to suffer it; and upon this the House was dissolved, even when the Speaker was going to put the last question."*

It was, in fact, such a crisis as occurs in every revolution, wherein the end justifies the means, and the characterizing of the deed, as patriotic bravery, or infamous rebellion, depends very much on its success or failure. Cromwell is spoken of by nearly every one of his defamers as having broken down the palladium of English liberty, in the dismission of the long parliament. He was only making such another innovation as had been sanctioned by itself repeatedly, and has been approved of by the most cautious historians. Great revolutions, indeed, must be judged of by their fruits; they are for the future more than for the time of their birth, and could they who enter upon them know all the fiery struggle they must endure, and how little of its fruits they shall reap, their magnanimity would be almost superhuman, if they persevered. In 1641, this parliament declared its sittings permanent; enacting, that it should not be adjourned without the consent of the two Houses. In 1642 they issued their famous "Ordinance for the Militia," resolute, in spite of constitutional forms, to levy war against King, or any one else who resisted them. In 1643, they made solemn league with the Scots, an act involving every legal formula of

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 201.

treason, and couched in terms that necessarily implied the total overthrow of the established religion, and very effectually carried the principle into practice. In 1644, while twenty-two peers and 280 commoners sat as the parliament at Westminster, forty-five peers and 118 commoners, members of the same parliament which had declared itself permanent, assembled by order of the King, at Oxford, and constituted themselves *the parliament of England*—a defection amounting, in one House to a majority of more than all the body of Peers adhering to the popular cause, which yet, in no way influenced the proceedings of the parliament at Westminster. Then followed Pride's Purge, by which about an hundred more were added to the absentees from parliament; and thereafter, the execution of the King, and the abolition of the Upper House; leaving this very small minority, thus winnowed by successive acts of various kinds, still claiming for an assembly of some fifty commoners, all the rights and privileges that belonged to the English parliament, or had been at any time assumed by it during these years of struggle. To dismiss such an assembly, at such a crisis, was, we conceive, just one of those proceedings, the whole merits of which depend on the use that was made of it. So far as any constitutional right, derived from ancient laws or usages was concerned, Cromwell possessed as good a claim to the supreme power as the members of the Rump to that of the parliament of England. Above all, he appears to have possessed that indisputable claim, better at such a crisis than all others, of being able to wield the power which he assumed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BAREBONES PARLIAMENT.

THE last remnant of the long parliament fell, not only without regret, but amid the general rejoicings of the nation. So fickle a criterion of worth, however, as popular favour, is a poor standard by which to judge either of this last relic of the old constitution, or of the new power by which it was superseded. Cromwell was no courter of popular applause; probably, indeed, no man ever lived who was less influenced in his actions by the probable opinion others might form of them. When he returned from his swift and triumphant progress through Ireland, he was received with every conceivable demonstration of popular favour from the moment he landed at Bristol till he reached Whitehall; the parliament, common council, army, and civilians, each vieing with the others in welcoming the victorious General whom they delighted to honour As he rode to Whitehall amid the boisterous salutations of the excited multitude, one of his escort congratulated him on the crowds his triumph had attracted "Yes!" replied he composedly, "but if it were to see me hanged, how many would there be!" The love of power is a more conceivable motive in one who had so long wielded the military truncheon;—a far more absolute sceptre than that of monarchs, when borne by a victorious General, with all the unchallenged authority of a despot, and all the reverential admiration of a democratic leader. The love of his country, and the desire for the establishment of justice and religious toleration, amid the clash of so many antagonistic elements as then divided England, seem on the whole still more conceivable motives, and more consistent with the character of the man.

The true test of his motives must be looked for in the use he made of his power, and the very first step he took exhibits in a very striking manner, as I think, both the object he had in view and the means he conceived to be necessary for its attainment.

Cromwell, it is very plain, had never any leaning towards universal suffrage as the panacea for the political disorders of his age, nor—from ought that appears—of any other. Whether it was Ironsides or governing Notables that he wanted, he seems to have regarded that as a very clumsy and unsatisfactory means for their discovery. Nevertheless, that it was the interests of the multitude he had in view, and not the establishment of a military despotism, is sufficiently apparent from his earliest proceedings, though he regarded the end rather than the means, and was not greatly troubled with misgivings as to what precedents might be discoverable in the statutes of Richard II., or Henry VII. A declaration, published in the name of "Oliver Cromwell, Captain-General," notified that an assembly of persons of approved fidelity and honesty should be called from the several parts of the Commonwealth to the supreme authority; and there were issued accordingly, not long after, one hundred-and-forty summonses, couched in the following terms, and addressed to as many men, "known persons, fearing God, and of approved integrity."

"SUMMONS.

"Forasmuch as, upon the dissolution of the late parliament, it became necessary, that the peace, safety, and good government of this Commonwealth should be provided for: And in order thereunto, divers persons fearing God, and of approved fidelity and honesty, are, by myself with the advice of my council of officers, nominated; to whom the great charge and trust of so weighty affairs is to be committed: And having good assurance of your love to, and courage for, God and the interest of

his cause, and that of the good people of this Commonwealth:

"I, Oliver Cromwell, Captain-General and Commander-in-chief of all the armies and forces raised and to be raised within this Commonwealth, do hereby summon and require you, —— ——, being one of the persons nominated, —personally to be and appear at the Council-Chamber, commonly known or called by the name of the Council-Chamber at Whitehall, within the city of Westminster, upon the fourth day of July next ensuing the date hereof; Then and there to take upon you the said trust; unto which you are hereby called, and appointed to serve as a member for the county of ——. And hereof you are not to fail.

"Given under my hand and seal the 6th day of June, 1653.

"OLIVER CROMWELL."*

Of the whole number thus called together to deliberate on the safety and good government of the Commonwealth, only two failed to attend, "though they knew well," as one of their number remarks, "that their call was not according to ancient formality and the way of the nation."

It was, without doubt, one of the most extraordinary assemblies ever called together to deliberate on a nation's affairs,—the celebrated *Barebone's Parliament*, which by the chance coinage of a ridiculous epithet, has been consigned to the contempt of posterity as an assemblage of ignorant and low-born fanatics, fit only to be the tool of a designing usurper. "Much the major part of them," says Clarendon, "consisted of inferior persons of no quality or name, artificers of the meanest trades, known only by their gifts in praying and preaching, which was now practised by all degrees of men, but scholars, throughout the kingdom. In which number, that there

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 183

may be a better judgment made of the rest, it will not be amiss to name one, from whom that parliament itself was afterwards denominated, who was Praise-God (that was his Christian name) Barebone, a leather-seller in Fleet-Street; from whom, he being an eminent speaker in it, it was afterward's called Praise-God Barebone's Parliament. In a word, they were a pack of weak, senseless fellows, fit only to bring the name and reputation of parliaments lower than it was yet."

The reader has heard of this parliament before. Possibly the ingenious device of substituting for argument the misnomer of the city leather-merchant, Barbone—who, for all the quaintness of his name, would appear to have been a man of wealth as well as of influence and good understanding,—possibly this device of a lucky nickname has sufficed, and the reader has long since taken for granted, with Clarendon, that they were a pack of mean, hypocritical, senseless fellows, *known only by their gifts of praying and preaching;* so convenient a substitute is ridicule for argument. Yet the list of that assembly still exists, showing among its numbers such names as Viscount Lisle; George, Lord Eure; Montague, afterwards Earl of Sandwich; Howard, afterwards Earl of Carlyle; Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury; George Monk, afterwards Duke of Albemarle; Admiral Blake, and a list of eminent men of high military rank, who had served with honour in the wars. Sundry baronets of old family appear on the roll; and twelve of those who had sat in the long parliament formed a portion of its successor. One finds there Francis Rouse, Provost of Eton College; Colonel Hutchinson; Major Salway; Richard Mayor, of Hursley; Alderman Ireton, brother of the more celebrated Lord Deputy; with others, whom Carlyle rightly calls "Peers of Nature." Scotland too sent her quota of representatives to this assembly of notables:—Sir William Lockhart, of Lee, afterwards Am-

bassador at the Court of Louis XIV.; Sir James Hope, of Hopetoun; Alexander Swinton, of Swinton, one of the Scottish Judges; Alexander Brodie, of Brodie; and the celebrated Alexander Jaffray, Provost of Aberdeen; the two last of whom had been selected by the Scottish Committee of State in 1650, to accompany the Earls of Cassillis and Lothian to Breda, to obtain Charles's signature to the Covenant.

Such were the men who were stigmatized as a set of illiterate mechanics, and needy, low-born, adventurers. The reader will discover in this, how very slight a foundation may suffice to pervert the honest judgment of successive generations; perhaps also he will draw from it the conclusion, that good grounds exist for the long and reiterated demand for a revision, if not a reversal, of the sentence, which bigoted and licentious cavaliers pronounced on their conqueror; and which successive generations of Englishmen have handed on unchallenged, as a historic legacy to our time. With greater honesty, Whitelocke remarks:—"Many of this assembly being persons of fortune and knowledge, it was much wondered at by some that they would, at this summons, and from such hands, take upon them the supreme authority of this nation, considering how little authority Cromwell and his officers had to give it, or these gentlemen to take it." Much wondered indeed! Why, the nation had come, upon the whole, to look upon the Lord General as Protector and King almost as a matter of course. Had he not already proved himself their King and Protector, in a way no *legitimate* sovereign had done for some generations? Ludlow, whom most writers agree to regard as an honest, if not an unprejudiced witness, exclaims in mournful and indignant admiration of the disbanded parliament, whom these notables were to supersede: "A parliament that had performed such great things, having subdued their enemies in England, Scotland, and Ireland; established

the liberty of the people; reduced the kingdom of Portugal to such terms as they thought fit to grant; maintained a war against the Dutch with that conduct and success, that it seemed now drawing to a happy conclusion; recovered our reputation at sea; secured our trade; and provided a powerful fleet for the service of the nation. And, however the malice of their enemies may endeavour to deprive them of the glory which they justly merited, yet it will appear to unprejudiced posterity that they were a disinterested and impartial parliament, who, though they had the sovereign power of the three nations in their hands for the space of ten or twelve years, did not in all that time give away among themselves so much as their forces spent in three months; no, nor so much as they spent in one; from the time that the parliament consisted but of one House, and the government was formed into a Commonwealth. To which ought to be added, that after so many toils and hazards, so much trouble and loss for the public good, they were not unwilling to put an end to their power, and to content themselves with an equal share with the others, for the whole reward of their labours."*

Without detracting from the real merits of the long parliament, an assembly of which true Englishmen will never cease to be proud, such an eulogium on their services to the nation becomes a strange argument, when used to disparage a government, at the head of which appear the names of Oliver Cromwell and Robert Blake, the illustrious leaders whose genius had mainly effected those triumphs of arms, and that liberty of which Ludlow boasts. The mustering of such an assembly in obedience to the summons of the Lord General is, in truth, "a sign that Puritan England, in general, accepts this action of Cromwell and his officers, and thanks them for it in such an extremity."†

* Memoirs of Oliver Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 452.

† Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 155

On the 4th of July, 1653, the assembly thus singularly called together by the summons of the Lord General Cromwell, met in the council-chamber of Whitehall, and listened to a speech from the Lord General for upwards of an hour, in which he "thought it not amiss to remind them of that series of providences wherein the Lord hath appeared, dispensing wonderful things to these nations, from the beginning of our troubles to this very day," and especially those things wherein the life and power of past transactions lay, "those strange windings and turnings of Providence, those very great appearances of God in crossing and thwarting the purposes of men, that He might raise up a poor and contemptible company of men, [viz. the parliamentary army,] neither versed in military affairs, nor having much natural propensity to them." He then refers to the many memorable events of the year 1648, and particularly to the threatened conjunction of the Presbyterian party with the King; "The carriage of some in places of trust, in most eminent places of trust, which was such as (had not God miraculously appeared) would have frustrated us of the hopes of all our undertakings. I mean by the closing of the treaty with the King; whereby they would have put into his hands all that we had engaged for, and all our securities should have been a little piece of paper;" and he goes on to point out to them an evident token of Providence set upon every step towards the change of the government, so that he who runs may read it.

The passage in this speech most worthy of note for our present purpose, is that wherein Cromwell enters on the defence of his own and the army's interference with the long parliament, after it had been "winnowed, sifted, and brought to a handful."

"I shall now," he remarks, "begin a little to remind you of the passages that have been transacted since Worcester. Coming from whence, with the rest of my fellow-officers and

soldiers, we did expect, and had some reasonable confidence our expectations would not be frustrated, that, having such an history to look back unto, such a God, so eminently visible, even our enemies confessing that 'God himself was certainly engaged against them, else they should never have been disappointed in *every* engagement,' —and that may be used by the way, that if we had but miscarried in the least, all our former mercies were in danger to be lost:—I say, coming up then, we had some confidence that the mercies God had shown, and the expectations which were upon our hearts, and upon the hearts of all good men, would have prompted those who were in authority to do those good things which might, by honest men, have been judged fit for such a God, and worthy of such mercies; and indeed been a discharge of duty from those to whom all these mercies had been shown, for the true interest of this nation. Indeed we may say that, ever since the coming up of myself and those gentlemen who have been engaged in the military part, it hath been full in our hearts and thoughts, to desire and use all the fair and lawful means we could to have the nation reap the fruit of all the blood and treasure that had been spent in this cause: and we have had many desires, and thirstings in our spirits, to find out ways and means wherein we might be anywise instrumental to help it forward. We were very tender for a long time, so much as to petition. For some of the officers being members; and others having very good acquaintance with, and some relations to, divers members of parliament,—we did, from time to time, solicit such; thinking if there had been nobody to prompt them, nor call upon them, these things might have been attended to, from ingenuity and integrity in those that had it in their power to answer such expectations.

"Truly when we saw nothing would be done, we did, as we thought according to our duty, a little, to remind

them by a petition; which I suppose you have seen: it was delivered, as I remember, in August last. What effect that had, is likewise very well known. The truth is, we had no return at all for our satisfaction,—a few words given us; the things presented by us, or the most of them, we were told, 'were under consideration:' and those not presented by us had very little or no consideration at all. Finding the people dissatisfied in every corner of the nation, and all men laying at our doors the non-performance of these things, which had been promised, and were of duty to be performed,—truly we did then think ourselves concerned, if we would (as becomes honest men) keep up the reputation of honest men in the world. And therefore we, divers times, endeavoured to obtain meetings with divers members of parliament;—and we did not begin those till about October last. And in these meetings we did, with all faithfulness and sincerity, beseech them that they would be mindful of their duty to God and men, in their discharge of the trust reposed in them. I believe (as there are many gentlemen here know) we had at least ten or twelve meetings; most humbly begging and beseeching of them, that by their own means they would bring forth those good things which had been promised and expected; that so it might appear they did not do them by any suggestion from the army, but from their own ingenuity: so tender were we to preserve them in the reputation of the people. Having had very many of those meetings; and declaring plainly that the issue would be the displeasure and judgment of God, the dissatisfaction of the people, the putting of all things into a confusion: yet how little we prevailed we very well know, and we believe it is not unknown to you.

"At last, when indeed we saw that things would not be laid to heart, we had a very serious consideration among ourselves what other ways to have recourse unto;

and when we grew to more closer considerations, then they, 'the parliament men,' began to take the act for a representative to heart, and seemed exceeding willing to put it on. And had it been done with integrity, there could nothing have happened more welcome to our judgments than that. But plainly the intention was, not to give the people a right of choice; it would have been but a seeming right: that semblance of giving them a choice was only to recruit the House, the better to perpetuate *themselves*. And truly, having been, divers of us, spoken unto to give way hereunto, to which we made perpetual aversions, indeed abominating the thoughts of it,—we declared our judgments against it, and our dissatisfaction with it. And yet they that would not hear of a representative formerly, when it lay three years before them, without proceeding one line, or making any considerable progress,—I say, those that would not hear of this bill formerly, did now, when they saw us falling into more closer considerations, make, instead of protracting their bill, as much preposterous haste with it on the other side, and run into that opposite extremity.

"Finding that this spirit was not according to God; and that the whole weight of this cause,—which must needs be very dear unto us who had so often adventured our lives for it, and we believe it was so to you,—did hang upon the business now in hand; and seeing plainly that there was not here any consideration to assert this cause, or provide security for *it*, but only to cross the troublesome people of the army, who by this time were high enough in their displeasures: truly, I say, when we saw all this, having power in our hands, we could not resolve to let such monstrous proceedings go on, and so to throw away all our liberties into the hands of those whom we had fought against; we came, first, to this conclusion among ourselves, that if we had been *fought* out of our liberties and rights, necessity would have taught

us patience; but that to deliver them sluggishly up would render us the basest persons in the world, and worthy to be accounted haters of God and of his people. I speak here, in the presence of some that were at the closure of our consultations, and as before the Lord,—the thinking of an act of violence was to us worse than any battle that ever we were in, or that could be, to the utmost hazard of our lives: so willing were we, even very tender, and desirous if possible that these men might quit their places with honour." *

This said, he presses on the assembly the duty of employing their authority diligently for the furtherance of the work to which they have been so wonderfully called; and so he dismisses them "to their own thoughts and the guidance of God." The whole speech is worthy of study and full of meaning, notwithstanding the involved style of the speaker, whose speeches often indicate thoughts far loftier and more coherent than his struggling and imperfect utterance. It abounds also sufficiently with the style and phraseology of the period, which so many writers have falsely pronounced "mere cant and hypocritical slang." If the reader, will but bear in remembrance that he was addressing an assembly of Puritan notables, he will detect in some of that unwonted language a truly noble spirit of religious toleration, which he seeks to commend to his audience by means most calculated to win their favourable reception. When, for example, in speaking of the short-comings of the parliament, he says, "finding that good was never intended to the people of God," he immediately adds, as if to check any sectarian spirit of an assembly so constituted: "when I say the people of God, I mean the large comprehension of them under the several forms of godliness in this nation." Again, how truly catholic and beautiful is the following, when we consider the assembly to whom it was addressed:

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 191.

"I hope, whatever others may think, it may be a matter to us all of rejoicing, to have our hearts touched,—with reverence be it spoken,—as Christ was touched with our infirmities, that He might be merciful. So should we be; we should be pitiful. Truly this calls us to be very much touched with the infirmities of the saints; that we may have a respect unto all, and be pitiful and tender towards all, though of different judgments. And if I did seem to speak something that reflected on those of the Presbyterial judgment,—truly I think if we have not an interest of love for them too, we shall hardly answer this of being faithful to the saints. . . . Therefore I beseech you,—but I think I need not,—have a care of the whole flock. Love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that are good; and if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you,—if any shall desire but to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protected." Is not this noble language for the seventeenth century, or indeed for any century? To translate it into the speech of our own day, the word *Christians*, as in the latter sentence, should be substituted for that of *Saints*, which is its exact equivalent as used now; unless, indeed, that it is much more thoughtlessly and irreverently bandied about than its equivalent then was, and consequently is far more deserving of censure. In our day, when Tractarians canonize Charles and Laud, while they deliver over all who differ from themselves to "the uncovenanted mercies of God,"—what these may be, in their estimation, it might not be pleasant to learn,—and make no great secret of their faith in the intercession of *the Saints*, the application of this term by Cromwell will no doubt appear a very shameless prostitution. Unless, however, both the historian and his reader seek to realize the habits and usages of past ages, it is utterly vain to hope that they can arrive at a just judgment of their acts.

Such is a hasty glance at what Forster has styled "the grave cheat of the 4th of July, 1653." On the following day the Convention met in the old parliament-house at Westminster, and after devoting the most of the day to religious services they elected as their Speaker, Francis Rouse, a man of good fortune, and Provost of Eton College.

It was not as insane fanatics, but as very business-like, though somewhat too hasty reformers, that this assembly began their work. It was by no half measures that they resolved to accomplish the task for which they had been called together; and had they succeeded in effecting their ends, there would have been less work left for the reformers of the nineteenth century. The first grievance they took up was that of tithes; which was, after some days' discussion, referred to a special committee. The law, with its proverbial costliness and delays, next occupied their attention, and was also referred to a committee, who recommended soon after, that the Court of Chancery should be totally taken away and abolished, as a source of partiality, uncertainty, and enormous expense to its suitors; no better, in fact, than "a mystery of wickedness, and a standing cheat." In like manner the revenue, public debts and frauds, corporate privileges, the universities, and foreign treaties, were each referred to small working committees, intended to mature schemes for their reformation, and to submit them to the whole assembly for final adjudication. Forster, while ascribing to Cromwell the strange policy of having "summoned these honest and not unwise fanatics," merely as instruments to play their parts in forwarding his ambitious ends, yet does justice to them in his narrative of their proceedings. "The *parliament of saints*," says he,* "had meanwhile been working to Cromwell's wish. Their measures of general polity and reform now claim from us a fair recital, and will be found, indeed, well worthy of it.

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 194.

"Be it first observed, that they began their duties by establishing in all matters appertaining to the state a system of the most rigid economy. They revised the regulation of the excise; they simplified and improved the constitution of the treasury, by reducing into one the several receipts of the revenue; they abolished unnecessary offices, and reduced exorbitant salaries; they subjected to a most rigorous scrutiny the various public accounts, and gave new facilities to the sale of the lands now considered as national property. In all these things, as in others I will shortly name, the spirit of the long parliament had survived the dispersion of its members: in the fanaticism of language and occasional extravagance of argument by which the truth and advantages of such a course of policy were obscured in the convention, we must at once in fairness recognise the original vice of its origin. It should never have been expected that anything could supply that grave defect in the minds of the more sensible English people.

"Thus deficient in the only solid support they could hope to rest on, they had at once commenced their quarrel with the formidable class interests, and with the army first. It had been with visible reluctance that they voted the monthly tax of L.120,000 for the support of the military and naval establishments. They were, indeed, careful not to complain of the amount; their objections were pointed against the nature of the tax, and the inequality of the assessments; but this pretext could not hide their real object from the jealousy of their adversaries; and their leaders were openly charged with seeking to reduce the number of the army, that they might lessen the influence of the Lord General.

"Their war with the lawyers was more daringly and openly conducted. Among the first acts they passed were those for taking away fines on bills, declarations, and original writs, and for the redress of delays and mischiefs arising out of writs of error. They passed at the

same time an act respecting marriages, which, with several others, was sanctioned by their successors in 1656, and which declared that they should in all cases be preceded by publication of banns in church, or in the market-place on market-day; and a certificate being granted of such publication, together with the exception made, if any, that the ceremony should then take place before some justice of the peace within the county. This measure, which was strongly opposed by the clergy as well as the lawyers, they accompanied with acts for the registration of marriages, and also of births and burials. They prepared and introduced other bills, with less success in passing them. Among them were, for example, an attempt to constitute by enactment a public committee for advance of trade; a new system of workhouses and provision for the poor; and many admirable remedies for making the law more expeditious and less chargeable."

The reader is referred to Forster's life for the only careful and impartial analysis of the proceedings of "the little parliament" that has yet been made, and from that the reader will learn that its sole crime consisted in the zeal with which it proceeded to uproot the sources of evil that ages of class government had established in the Com monwealth. Experience teaches us that in the majority of cases the diseases of the body politic must be dealt with more tenderly, and that its reformers must often act like the skilful surgeon, who examines not only the morbid tumour that has infected the body, but also the whole body, to ascertain if it be safe and seasonable to apply the amputating knife. These Puritan notables, however, took a simpler view of the case. The *tumour* was, in their estimation, an altogether noisome and offensive excrescence, which the body politic must have removed ere it could in anywise be reported in a healthy state; and so the amputating knife was forthwith produced, and set, ready for immediate use. "Finding grievances," says Car-

lyle, "greater than could be borne; finding, for one thing, 23,000 causes, of from five to thirty years' continuance, lying undetermined in Chancery, it seemed to the parliament, that some court ought to be contrived which would actually determine these and the like causes. So far as we can discover, it was mainly by this attack on the lawyers, and attempt to abolish Chancery, that the little parliament perished. The lawyers exclaimed, Chancery? Law of the Bible? Do you mean to bring in the *Mosaic dispensation*, then, and deprive men of their properties? Deprive men of their properties, and us of our learned wigs, and lucrative long-windedness? With you search for *simple justice*, and *God's law*, instead of learned serjeant's law!"* The attempt to reduce the huge and unintelligible collection of statutes, the accumulation of ages, to such a simple code as all men could understand, was resisted with the most determined energy. Every petty form, and every factious device that could be made available for the purpose, were applied to retard these reforms, or bring them into odium. All chance of further good from this assembly appeared to be at an end; and so, after ten days' manœuvreing and fierce debating, a majority of them met, without previous notice, and taking advantage of the absence of the extreme party, they signed a deed, by which they resigned their power into Cromwell's hands.

The view that is taken by nearly every writer, both of this assembly, and of Cromwell's motives in calling it together, might be supposed inconceivable, as it seems to me, had it not already been set forth and defended by honest and able biographers. We are told that Cromwell assembled this parliament—the majority of whom he had never before seen, and over whose nomination he exercised no control—as mere "instruments of his ambition." His policy was "to win open trust, and pay it back with se-

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 224.

cret treachery." His whole scheme resolves itself to this, that he summoned together an upright, earnest, enthusiastic body of legislators, that, by their determined measures for reform, every class of men interested in retaining things as they were might find in himself their sole refuge.* Did ever man before venture so blind a leap? Did ever magician hedge himself in by such airy circle, ere he summoned from "the vasty deep" an unknown spirit, whose powers and whose propensities he had yet to learn? The legends of demonology warn us of wizards, who, after summoning the fiend, have found, when too late, that no wave of their impotent wand would dismiss him to the shades; but Cromwell's biographers can believe in greater marvels; can believe, in fact, in any hypothesis, rather than in the inconceivable one, that he was an honest man.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LORD PROTECTOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

For those who can find no other key to Cromwell's actions, than ambition and the craving for power, now has come the period for which he has plotted and schemed so long—the hour in which the false patriot throws aside the thin disguise of his hypocrisy, and takes to himself the crown of the dethroned and murdered King. In real truth, however, the change was only a nominal one to Cromwell; he was to be recognised henceforth by all men as the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. But had he not really been so for years? Was he not recognised by most men, avowedly or tacitly, as the only man really possessing

* See Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. pp. 164, 165.

the faculty of governing, the genius of kingship; by which mainly the Commonwealth had been held together, since ever hope of reconciliation with Charles, or of compromise being entered into by him with any honest purpose of fulfilment, had died out of all men's hearts?

Cromwell received the resignation of his first parliament with surprise and emotion, or "a well-painted air of surprise," as those who adhere to the hypocritic theory, discover it to have been. Of the resignation itself, however, no question could exist. Howsoever it was brought about, the fact is unquestionable, that the deed by which the short parliament resigned its powers into the hands of Cromwell received the signatures of a decided majority of the whole assembly. On Friday the 16th of Dec., 1653, Westminster Hall—the scene of such varied transactions memorable in the history of England—was crowded with an august assembly. The members of the Council of State, the judges, the chief officers of the army, the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, with the Commissioners of the Great Seal, and other officers of state, were all met in their official robes, for the ceremony of installation of the Lord Protector of these kingdoms. The area of the hall was crowded with spectators, and as Cromwell entered, clothed in no gorgeous trappings of state, but with a simple suit and cloak of black velvet, that vast assembly stood up uncovered. The whole ceremony was conducted with simple and impressive dignity. Lambert stepped forth from the officers of state, and after proclaiming the dissolution of the parliament, and expressing the great need the nation had for a stable government, at so critical an era, he requested the Lord General to accept the office of Protector and chief magistrate of the Commonwealth, under a new instrument of government, which had been drawn up by the council of the army and the chief officers of state. By this new constitution, which was a document of great ability, su-

preme authority was vested in the chief magistrate, and in the people in parliament assembled. A council of not fewer than thirteen persons was to be constituted, to assist and advise with the Protector, and to him was committed the ordering of all forces by sea and land, power of peace and war, and the authority for all writs, processes, commissions, &c. The power of altering or repealing any of the laws was declared to rest with the parliament, which was to be summoned every third year. When this instrument of government had been read, the Lord Commissioner Lisle administered to Cromwell the oath of fidelity as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, and after some ceremonies symbolic of the supreme authority he was now to exercise, he returned in state to the palace of Whitehall. That same day, proclamation of the new government was made in London, with all the wonted ceremonial on the accession of a new monarch, and the same was soon after promulgated in every quarter of the kingdom, in the name of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. One of the first acts of Cromwell, in the exercise of his prerogative as the source of honour and inferior power, was the appointment of Sir Matthew Hale as one of the judges of the Common Bench.

With wonderful tact the Lord Protector adapted his manner so as to win the favour of men of all parties. The republicans he received in private on the most perfect equality, making them sit down covered beside him, and showing by his whole conduct how little he valued the ceremonious forms of office and authority by which he was surrounded. The royalists he received with a dignified courtesy, calculated to win their respect, while it invited their proffer of allegiance. To all men he could adapt himself with a sagacity and promptness, which, to an unprejudiced mind, must rather prove his fitness to govern, than any duplicity and artifice in attempting to establish his power. He had not, indeed, long occupied his ex-

alted office as acknowledged Protector of the kingdom, ere he had sufficient evidence afforded him that it was no bed of roses he had attained to, whereon to repose in the enjoyment of power. He had seen, in accepting the office of chief magistrate, that he concentrated on himself all the enmity of cavaliers and royalists, and indeed of all others who were bent on promoting some scheme of government different from the one established. Above all he felt, that by placing a single person as the representative of the English Commonwealth, he exposed himself to the secret blow of the hired assassin; and this he soon learned was a means that his royal rival was not ashamed openly to encourage. "In Paris, Charles Stuart still lived, in the mimic state of a king, with his Lord-keeper Ormond, his Chancellor of the Exchequer Hyde, his Privy Councillors and Officers of Household. It will naturally be supposed that Hyde had a sinecure in his office. This pitiful court was in truth in a villanous condition of beggary. A clean shirt was a rarity, and a good dinner a thing long remembered. Surrounded by such sordid wants, Charles Stuart yet spent his monthly allowance of six thousand francs from the French King with a profligate and reckless profusion while it lasted, in which no beggar or pensioner has before or since excelled him. But suddenly the rise of the protectorate—of the renewed government by a single person—shed rays of unaccustomed hope upon his ragged courtiers, and he was induced to turn aside for a time from the embraces of Lucy Walters, to listen to the lively project of a general muster of murderers from Ormond and Hyde.

" In a short space, a proclamation had obtained extensive circulation through private channels in Paris and London, which began thus:—'By the King, Charles the Second, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, to all our good and loving subjects, peace and prosperity. Whereas a

certain mechanic fellow, by name Oliver Cromwell, hath, by most wicked and accursed ways and means, against all laws, both divine and human, most tyrannically and traitorously usurped the supreme power over our said kingdoms . . . . these are in our name to give freedom and liberty to any man whomsoever, within any of our three kingdoms, by pistol, sword, or poison, or by any other ways or means whatsoever, to destroy the life of the said Oliver Cromwell, wherein they will do an act acceptable to God and good men.' The proclamation further promised, 'on the faith of a Christian King,' to the perpetrators and his heirs a reward of five hundred pounds a year for ever, and the honour of knighthood; and, 'if he is a soldier, the office of a Colonel, with such other honourable employment, as may render him capable of attaining to further preferment corresponding to his merit.' Copies of this infamous proclamation, which has been attributed, on excellent authority, to the ready pen of Sir Edward Hyde, were speedily, as I have said, and very largely circulated; but solemn secrecy was at the same time preserved, and they were of course communicated to none but those from whom good faith, perhaps engagement in the purposed enterprise, was thought beyond question sure.

"But what is good faith among assassins! Cromwell had already began a system of espionage, which kept in nearly every royalist or fanatic circle 'a servant feed.' The very agents whom Charles Stuart employed, were most frequently the men who betrayed his secrets,—the assassins, on whose daggers he most relied, were generally men who seduced his wretched adherents into imaginary plots, that by opportune discovery they might curry favour with the Lord Protector. A man of this class was a Major Henshaw. On the appearance of the proclamation he repaired to Paris, in company with an enthusiastic young royalist, named Gerard. Here a conspiracy was

organised, and Gerard and Henshaw returned to England to complete it. The Lord Protector was to be murdered on the road as he passed from Whitehall to Hampton Court—the guards at the former place were to be suddenly disarmed—the town surprised—and Charles II. proclaimed. In this plot a number of men engaged, and it was given in evidence on the trial, that Cromwell received notice of the design a few hours before it was to have been executed, and was only able to render it abortive by crossing the water at Putney, and thus avoiding the ambuscade. But this was merely to conceal the treachery of Henshaw, who, having disclosed every thing in time to the council, suddenly vanished from the whole affair, and was seen in it no more. The truth was, that the chief conspirators were taken the night before the appointed day; some of them, as Gerard, were dragged out of their beds to prison; and a variety of others, on little or no pretence whatever, were seized in the character of accessories."*

Gerard and his accomplice, Vowel, were condemned and executed, and the account of this base scheme published by authority, helped in no slight degree to increase the popular distaste for its royal projector. But the same scaffold on which these unsuccessful assassins perished, witnessed another execution much more characteristic of the Protector of England. Some time before, during the sitting of the little parliament, Don Pantaleon Sa, brother of the Portuguese Ambassador, had some private quarrel with this same Gerard, and drew upon him in open day at Exeter Change. Blows ensued, and the combatants were with difficulty separated. The Portuguese, burning to be revenged against his opponent, gathered together a body of armed retainers, and waylaid and slew—not the hired assassin Gerard—but a person named Greenway, whom he mistook for his rival in the dark. Don Pantaleon returned to the house of the Ambassador, whose fol-

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 241.

lowers he conceived might exercise with impunity in England, all the privileges and customs awarded to their own nobles at home. Cromwell, however, had very different notions. The Ambassador in vain pleaded his privilege. He was compelled to deliver up the murderer and his accomplices, who were dragged from his house and committed to Newgate. The most extraordinary excitement prevailed in London. The ministers and agents of foreign courts looked upon the case as one in which their own rights were at stake, and used all their influence on behalf of the accused, while the populace clamoured against them. Don Pantaleon and four of his accomplices were tried. He pleaded the privileges of an ambassador, on the ground that he had been nominated by his brother to succeed him, and insisted both for himself and his retainers, that the rights and immunities of an ambassador extended to all his retinue. Much to the Portuguese Ambassador's amazement, the Protector refused to step in between the assassin and the law, even though there was then pending a most important treaty between England and Portugal, almost ripe for signature. Cromwell refused to recognise any connection between the Ambassador's functions either for treating or signing, and the open trial by law of a murderer, who chanced to be his brother. A jury was empanneled, half foreigners. Don Pantaleon and his accomplices were found guilty, and condemned to death. Within a few hours of the signing of a treaty by the Portuguese Ambassador, which even Clarendon acknowledged long after to be "in very many respects the most advantageous treaty to this nation that ever was entered into with any prince or people," his brother ascended the same bloody scaffold on which Gerard had perished, and fell by the hands of the public executioner. His chief accomplice was hanged at Tyburn the same day; and Cromwell, having thus fearlessly asserted the majesty of law, and the independence of the English government be-

fore all Europe, extended his pardon to the less guilty actors in the crime.

These proofs of firmness and self reliance in the statesmen of England, wrought their full effect. Cardinal Mazarin, the Prime Minister of France, had favoured the infamous plot of assassination; thenceforth he became the most servile ally of the English Commonwealth. The ambassadors of every court of Europe crowded the levees of the Protector, who received them with the dignity and state of the most powerful monarch, and soon extended his influence, for the noblest ends, to the most despotic courts of Europe; nor was his policy less beneficial for England.

France, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, all courted his alliance, and the successive treaties signed by him with the chief countries of Europe, each secured important advantages to England, and afforded evidence of the sagacity and wisdom of its chief magistrate. "The shadow of Cromwell's name," says Walter Savage Landor, "overawed the most confident and haughty. He intimidated Holland, he humiliated Spain, and he twisted the supple Mazarin, the ruler of France, about his finger. All those nations had then attained the summit of their prosperity; all were unfriendly to the rising power of England; all trembled at the authority of that single man who coerced at once her aristocracy, her priesthood, and her factions. No agent of equal potency and equal moderation had appeared upon earth before."

On the 3d of September, the new parliament, elected by the free voice of the people, assembled in the Painted Chamber, at Westminster. A late day had been originally named; and this day too chanced to fall on a Sunday; nevertheless it was Cromwell's FORTUNATE DAY, the anniversary to him of mighty victories, in which he believed the hand of Providence had been specially manifested on his behalf. The members assembled in the afternoon in Westminster Abbey, and after hearing ser-

mon, they accompanied the Protector to the Painted Chamber, where he addressed them in a brief speech, after which they adjourned to the next day. On the following morning this new parliament was inaugurated with peculiar pomp. The Lord Protector rode in state to Westminster Abbey, accompanied by the Officers of State, the Commissioners of the Great Seal, the Officers of the Army, and the usual attendants on such pageants. Splendid apparel, gorgeous trappings, and all the wonted magnificence of royal ceremonial, gave effect to this public display, while in proud contrast to all this showy parade, Cromwell sat in the state carriage dressed in the simple garb of an English country gentleman. After hearing sermon, specially addressed to the new parliament, by the Rev. Thomas Goodwin, the members adjourned once more to the Painted Chamber, where Cromwell addressed them for nearly three hours on the great end of their meeting—for healing and settling the nation.

The speech is accessible to all, and well worthy of study by those who seek to understand the true character of Cromwell, and to learn in what light he presented his own policy to the consideration of others.

Unhappily, however, for Cromwell, and still more for England, this new parliament thus fairly called together, failed to accomplish the good that had been anticipated from it. Instead of proceeding to the consideration of such questions as usually fall to be discussed and settled by parliaments, its leading men chose rather to revise the form of government by which they had been called together, and to engage in endless mazes of debate, as to whether the government of England should be by a parliament and a single person, and whether indeed they could, or ought to sanction the form of government which, as Carlyle very pithily adds "nobody was specially asking them to sanction." The proceeding was perhaps natural enough; but it was, under all the circum-

stances, one that could not possibly lead to good. It seemed by no means impossible that a body of constitutional Presbyterians, extreme Republicans, and moderate Independents, attached to no particular theory of government, but not much inclined to quarrel with the authority that had then called them together, should be able to concoct measures for the general welfare of the nation: their very diversity of opinions rendering it the more probable that they might agree to legislate for the general good, than for mere sectarian or party interests. But that such an incongruous assembly could ever have been brought to agree to any one form of government is an idea altogether inconceivable. Bradshaw, Haselrig, and Scot, determined Republicans, took the lead in the discussion. They had not hesitated to bear their part when "God had made them instrumental in cutting down tyranny in one person," and they were not now less resolute in resolving to free the nation from the shackles of another, "whose claim to the government could be measured no otherwise than by the length of his sword." This closing argument against the *usurpation* of Cromwell, has been reiterated by some of his less partial and honestest biographers, as altogether conclusive in nullifying his right to the office of chief magistrate. But had he indeed no other claim? To some thinking men it begins now to appear that he had the best of all claims, which consisted in his being fit for the office—the only fit and able man to guide the Commonwealth through so perilous a crisis. Cromwell himself felt this, and recognised in it a divine right, that imposed on him duties more than privileges, often hard enough to perform. It is very natural and reasonable, however, that such a claim should be acknowledged with caution and great jealousy by contemporaries. It is an argument equally available for the unprincipled despot, and for the true friend of liberty. But the historian cannot be so excused. The test of such a claim rests

alone in the use that is made of the power which it asserts; and with Cromwell that power was used amid manifold difficulties, to forward the vital principles of liberty of conscience and universal toleration. That such was the case, one might expect would not now be thought to need proof. A Charles I., with Laud for his right hand adviser, and Strafford for his ablest man—a Cromwell, with Milton as his secretary penning, at his dictation, the edict of liberty of conscience to Europe—and then the *glorious restoration* with its Charles II., its Nell Gwynne, its St. Bartholomew's day, its Dalziel and Claverhouse, its boots and thumbkins, its bloody scaffold and gallows, its sycophancy, degradation, and contempt—these are the progressive acts of the drama; and when Cromwell had, mainly by his own right hand, and by his ability for the task, rescued his country from the former of these, with little heed for the constitutional formulas that precedent or older parliaments had established, it need not greatly excite our wonder that he should persist in rescuing it, during his lifetime, from the latter also, more intent on the end than the means.

The new parliament had gone on deliberately, day after day, debating the form of government they should *sanction*, with little appearance of speedily arriving at any very definite conclusion, when Cromwell hastily summoned them to the Painted Chamber, and once more addressed them in a speech well worthy of note, to those who wish to judge impartially of the leader of the English Commonwealth. It is full of vigour and powerful logic, and contains by far the best statement that can be produced, of the grounds on which Cromwell rested his claim to power. A few extracts will guide the reader to his course of reasoning:—"Gentlemen," said he, "It is not long since I met you in this place, upon an occasion which gave me much more content and comfort than this doth. That which I have now to say to you will need no pre-

amble to let me into my discourse: for the occasion of this meeting is plain enough. I could have wished with all my heart there had been no cause for it.

"At our former meeting I did acquaint you what was the first rise of this government, which hath called you hither, and by the authority of which you have come hither. Among other things which I then told you of, I said, you were a free parliament. And truly so you are,—whilst you own the government and authority which called you hither. But certainly that word 'free parliament' implied a reciprocity, or it implied nothing at all! Indeed there was a reciprocity implied and expressed; and I think your actions and carriages ought to be suitable! But I see it will be necessary for me now a little to magnify my office; which I have not been apt to do. I have been of this mind, I have been always of this mind, since I first entered upon my office, if God will not bear it up, let it sink! But if a duty be incumbent upon me to bear my testimony unto it, (which in modesty I have hitherto forborne), I am in some measure necessitated thereunto. And therefore that will be the prologue to my discourse.

"I called not myself to this place. I say again, I called not myself to this place! Of that God is witness: —and I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could lay down their lives bearing witness to the truth of that. Namely, That I called not myself to this place! And being in it, I bear not witness to myself or my office; but God and the people of these nations have also borne testimony to it and me. *If* my calling be from God, and my testimony from the people,—God and the people shall take it from me, else I will not part with it. I should be false to the trust that God hath placed in me, and to the interest of the people of these nations, if I did.

"'That I called not myself to this place,' is my first assertion. 'That I bear not witness to myself, but have many witnessess,' is my second. These two things I shall

take the liberty to speak more fully to you of.—To make plain and clear what I have here asserted, I must take liberty to look a little back.

"I was by birth a gentleman; living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity. I have been called to several employments in the nation: To serve in parliament, and others; and,—not to be over-tedious,—I did endeavour to discharge the duty of an honest man, in those services to God and his people's interest, and to the Commonwealth; having, when time was, a competent acceptation in the hearts of men, and some evidences thereof. I resolve, not to recite the times and occasions, and opportunities, which have been appointed me by God to serve him in; nor the presence and blessings of God therein bearing testimony to me.

"Having had some occasions to see, together with my brethren and countrymen, a happy period put to our sharp wars and contests with the then common enemy, I hoped, in a private capacity, to have reaped the fruit and benefit, together with my brethren, of our hard labours and hazards: the enjoyment, to wit, of peace and liberty, and the privileges of a Christian and a man, in some equality with others, according as it should please the Lord to dispense unto me. And when, I say, God had put an end to our wars, or at least brought them to a very hopeful issue, very near an end,—after Worcester fight,—I came up to London to pay my service and duty to the parliament which then sat; hoping that all minds would have been disposed to answer what seemed to be the mind of God, namely, To give peace and rest to his people, and especially to those who had bled more than others in the carrying on of the military affairs. I was much disappointed of my expectation; for the issue did not prove so. Whatever may be boasted or misrepresented, it was not so, not so!

"I can say, in the simplicity of my soul, I love not to

rake into sores, or to discover nakedness! The thing I drive at is this: I say to you, I hoped to have had leave, for my own part, to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again;—and God be judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter! That I lie not in matter of fact, is known to very many: but whether I tell a lie in my heart, as labouring to represent to you what was not upon my heart, I say the Lord be judge. Let uncharitable men, who measure others by themselves, judge as they please. As to the matter of fact, I say, it is true. As to the ingenuity and integrity of my heart in that desire,—I do appeal as before upon the truth of that also. But I could not obtain what I desired, what my soul longed for. And the plain truth is, I did afterwards apprehend some were of opinion (such the difference of their judgment from mine) that it could not well be.

"I confess I am in some strait to say what I could say, and what is true, of what then followed. I pressed the parliament, as a member, to period themselves;—once and again, and again, and ten, nay twenty times over. I told them,—for I knew it better than any man in the parliament could know it; because of my manner of life, which had led me everywhere up and down the nation, thereby giving me to know the temper and spirits of all men, and of the best of men,—that the nation loathed their sitting. I knew it. And, so far as I could discern, when they *were* dissolved, there was not so much as the barking of a dog, or any general and visible repining at it! You are not a few here present who can assert this as well as myself.

"And that there was high cause for their dissolution, is most evident: not only in regard there was a just fear of that parliament's perpetuating themselves, but because it actually was their design. Had not their heels been trod upon by importunities from abroad, even to threats,

I believe there never would have been any thoughts of rising, or of going out of that room, to the world's end. I myself was sounded, and, by no mean persons, tempted; and proposals were made me to that very end: That the parliament might be thus perpetuated; that the vacant places might be supplied by new elections;—and so continue from generation to generation."*

The Protector then proceeds to enlarge upon the fining and confiscation, and other abuses of power of the long parliament, and its arbitrary enactments; after which he thus describes the assembling of the "little parliament" in language well worthy of serious perusal:—"We, desiring to see if a few might have been called together for some short time who might put the nation into some way of certain settlement,—did call those gentlemen out of the several parts of the nation. And as I have appealed to God before you already,—though it be a tender thing to make appeals to God, yet in such exigences as these I trust it will not offend his Majesty; especially to make them before persons that know God, and know what conscience is, and what it is to 'lie before the Lord!' I say, as a principal end in calling that assembly was the settlement of the nation, so a chief end to myself was to lay down the power which was in my hands. I say to you again, in the presence of that God who hath blessed, and been with me in all my adversities and successes: That was, as to myself, my greatest end! A desire perhaps, I am afraid, sinful enough, to be quit of the power God had most clearly by His Providence put into my hands, before He called me to lay it down; before those honest ends of our fightings were attained and settled,—I say, the authority I have had in my hand being so boundless as it was,—for by act of parliament, I was general of all the forces of the three nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland; in which unlimited condition I

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 280.

did not desire to live a day,—we called that meeting for the ends before expressed.

"What the event and issue of the meeting was, we may sadly remember. It hath much teaching in it, and I hope will make us all wiser, for the future."*

He then describes their resignation of their power into his hands, and proceeds:—"When this proved so we were exceedingly to seek how to settle things for the future. My own power was again, by this resignation, become as boundless and unlimited as before; all things being subjected to arbitrariness; and myself, the only constituted authority that was left, a person having power over the three nations, without bound or limit set; and all government, upon the matter, being dissolved; all *civil* administration at an end—as will presently appear.

"The gentlemen that undertook to frame this government did consult divers days together (men of known integrity and ability) how to frame somewhat that might give us settlement. They did consult;—and that I was not privy to their counsels they know it. When they had finished their model in some measure, or made a good preparation of it, they became communicative. They told me that except I would undertake the government they thought things would hardly come to a composure or settlement, but blood and confusion would break in upon us. I refused it again and again; not complimentingly,—as they know, and as God knows! I confess, after many arguments, they urging on me, 'That I did not hereby receive anything which put me into a *higher* capacity than before; but that it *limited* me; that it bound my hands to act nothing without the consent of a council, until the parliament, and then limited me by the parliament, as the act of government expresseth,'—I did accept it. I might repeat again to you, if it were needful, but I think it hardly is: I was arbitrary in power; having

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 286.

the armies in the three nations under my command;—and truly not very ill beloved by them, not very ill beloved by the people,—by the good people. And I believe I should have been more beloved if they had known the truth, as things *were*, before God and in themselves, and also before divers of those gentlemen whom I but now mentioned unto you. I did, at the entreaty of divers persons of honour and quality, at the entreaty of very many of the chief officers of the army then present,—at their entreaty and at their request, I did accept of the place and title of PROTECTOR; and was, in the presence of the Commissioners of the Great Seal, the judges, the Lord Mayor and aldermen of the city of London, the soldiery, divers gentlemen, citizens, and divers other people and persons of quality, and so forth,—accompanied to Westminster Hall; where I took the oath to this government. This was not done in a corner: it was open and public! This government hath been exercised by a council; with a desire to be faithful in all things: and, among all other trusts, to be faithful in *calling this parliament.*"*

This done, the Protector proceeds to adduce evidence well known to the parliament, of the popular approval of his acceptance of the chief government. The officers of the army in the three nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland; the soldiers of the Commonwealth,—no inconsiderable body of persons,—"who had been instrumental, by God, to fight down the enemies of God and his people in the three nations;" the city of London, including the whole corporation and societies of its citizens; the "greatest county in England" rendering thanks to him by their grand jury, in name of the noblemen, gentlemen, yeomen, and inhabitants of the county; the judges of the land who, not only accepted, but were the first to demand new commissions from him;—all these were witnesses to his call by the nation to the office of supreme magistrate. Then

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p 288.

turning to the members themselves, Cromwell adds very emphatically:—"I have two or three witnesses, of still more weight than all I have counted and reckoned yet. All the people in England are my witnesses; and many in Ireland and Scotland! All the sheriffs in England are my witnesses: and all that have come in upon a process issued out by sheriffs are my witnesses. Yea, the returns of the elections to the clerk of the crown,—not a thing to be blown away by a breath,—the returns on behalf of the inhabitants in the counties, cities and boroughs, all are my witnesses of approbation to the condition and place I stand in.

"And I shall now make *you* my last witnesses! And shall ask you, whether you came not hither by my writs directed to the several sheriffs of counties, and through the sheriffs to the other officers of cities and liberties? To which writs the people gave obedience; having also had the act of government communicated to them,—to which end great numbers of copies thereof were sent down to be communicated to them. And the government was also required to be distinctly read unto the people at the place of election, to avoid surprises, or misleadings of them through their ignorance;—where also they signed the indenture, with proviso, 'That the persons so chosen should *not* have power to alter the government as now settled in one single person and a parliament!' And thus I have made good my second assertion, 'That I bear not witness to myself;' but that the good people of England, and you all are my witnesses.

"Yea, surely!—And now this being so,—though I told you in my last speech 'that you were a free parliament,' yet I thought it was understood withal that I was the Protector, and the authority that called you! That I was in possession of the government by a good right from God and men! And I believe if the learnedest men in this nation were called to show a precedent, equally clear, of

a government so many ways approved of, they would not in all their search find it.—I did not in my other speech take upon me to justify the act of government in every particular; and I told you the reason, which was plain: The act of government was public, and had long been published, in order that it might be under the most serious inspection of all that pleased to peruse it.

"This is what I had to say at present for approving myself to God and my conscience in my actions throughout this undertaking; and for giving cause of approving myself to every one of your consciences in the sight of God.—And if the fact be so, why should we sport with it?—with a business so serious! May not this character, this stamp bear equal poise with any hereditary interest that could furnish, or hath furnished, in the common law or elsewhere, matter of dispute and trial of learning? In the like of which many have exercised more wit, and spilt more blood, than I hope ever to live to see or hear of again in this nation! I say, I do not know why I may not balance this providence, in the sight of God, with *any* hereditary interest as a thing *less* subject to those cracks and flaws which that other is commonly incident unto; the disputing of which has cost more blood in former times in this nation than we have leisure to speak of now!

"Now, if this be thus, and I am deriving a title from God and men upon such accounts as these are—although some men be froward, yet that *your* judgments who are persons sent from all parts of the nation under the notion of approving this government—For you to disown or not to own it: for you to act with parliamentary authority especially in the disowning of it; contrary to the very fundamental things, yea against the very root itself of this establishment; to sit, and not own the authority by which you sit,—is that which I believe astonisheth more men than myself; and doth as dangerously dis-

appoint and discompose the nation as any thing that could have been invented by the greatest enemy to our peace and welfare, or that could well have happened.

"It is true, as there are some things in the establishment which are fundamental, so there are others which are not, but are circumstantial. Of these no question but I shall easily agree to vary, to leave out, according as I shall be convinced by reason. But some things are fundamentals! About which I shall deal plainly with you. These may *not* be parted with; but will, I trust, be delivered over to posterity, as the fruits of our blood and travail. The government by a single person and a parliament is a fundamental! It is the *esse*, it is constitutive. And as for the person,—though I may seem to plead for myself, yet I do not: no, nor can any reasonable man say it. If the things throughout this speech be true, I plead for this nation, and for all honest men therein who have borne their testimony as aforesaid, and not for myself! And if things should go otherwise than well, (which I would not fear,) and the common enemy and discontented persons take advantage of these distractions, the issue will be put up before God: let him own it, or let him disown it, as he pleases!"*

Cromwell then proceeds to define that "somewhat fundamental," which is essential to the existence of every government, in very clear and emphatic language, after which he proceeds with unusual energy:—"The wilful throwing away of this government, such as it is, so owned by God, so approved by men, so witnessed to (in the fundamentals of it) as was mentioned above, were a thing which,—and in reference not to *my* good, but to the good of these nations and of posterity,—I can sooner be willing to be rolled into my grave and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent unto! You have been called hither to save a nation,—nations. You had the best people, indeed, of the Christian world put into

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 294

your trust, when you came hither. You had the affairs of these nations delivered over to you in peace and quiet; you were, and we all are, put into an undisturbed possession, nobody making title to us. Through the blessing of God, our enemies were hopeless and scattered. We had peace at home; peace with almost all our neighbours round about,—apt otherwise to take advantages where God did administer them. These things we had few days ago when you came hither. And now?—To have our peace and interest, whereof those were our hopes the other day, thus shaken, and put under such a confusion; and ourselves rendered hereby almost the scorn and contempt of those strangers who are amongst us to negotiate their masters' affairs! To give *them* opportunity to see our nakedness as they do: A people that have been unhinged this twelve-years day, and are unhinged still, —as if scattering, division, and confusion came upon us like things we desired: *these*, which are the greatest plagues which God ordinarily lays upon nations for sin!

"Who can answer for these things to God, or to men? To men—to the people who sent you hither; who looked for refreshment from you; who looked for nothing but peace and quietness, and rest and settlement? When we come to give an account to them, we shall have it to say, Oh, we quarrelled for the *Liberty of England;* we contested, and went to confusion, for that!—now, wherein I pray you, for the 'Liberty of England?' I appeal to the Lord, that the desires and endeavours we have had—nay the things will speak for themselves. The 'Liberty of England,' the Liberty of the People; the avoiding of tyrannous impositions either upon men as men, or Christians as Christians;—is made so safe by this act of settlement, that it will speak for itself. And when it shall appear to the world what really hath been said and done by all of us, and what our real transactions were—for God can discover; no privilege will hinder the

Lord from discovering! No privilege, or condition of man can hide from the Lord; he can and will make all manifest, if he see it for his glory!—and when these things, as I say, shall be manifested: and the people will come and ask, 'Gentlemen, what condition is this we are in? We hoped for light; and behold darkness, obscure darkness! We hoped for rest after ten years civil war, but are plunged into deep confusion again!'—Ay; we know these consequences will come upon us, if God Almighty shall not find out some way to prevent them.

"I had a thought within myself, that it would not have been dishonest nor dishonourable, nor against true liberty, no not the liberty of parliaments, if,—when a parliament was so chosen as you have been, in pursuance of this instrument of government, and in conformity to it, and with such an approbation and consent to it,—some owning of your call and of the authority which brought you hither had been required before your entrance into the House. This was declined, and hath not been done, because I am persuaded scarce any man could imagine you came with contrary minds. And I have reason to believe the people that sent you least of all doubted thereof. And therefore I must deal plainly with you: What I forbore upon a just confidence at first, you necessitate me unto now! Seeing the authority which called you is so little valued, and so much slighted,—till some such assurance be given and made known, that the fundamental interest shall be settled and approved according to the proviso in the writ of return, and such a consent testified as will make it appear that the same is accepted, I HAVE CAUSED A STOP TO BE PUT TO YOUR ENTRANCE INTO THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE."*

He then intimates that an instrument of recognition of the authority by which they are called, lies in the lobby for their signatures, and adds in conclusion:—" The 'in-instrument of government' doth declare that you have a

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p 301.

legislative power without a negative from me. As the instrument doth express it, you may make any laws; and if I give not my consent, within twenty days, to the passing of your laws, they are *ispo facto* laws, whether I consent or no,—if not contrary to the frame of government. You have an absolute legislative power in all things that can possibly concern the good and interest of the public; and I think you may make these nations happy by this settlement. And I, for my part, shall be willing to be more bound than I am, in anything concerning which I can become convinced that it may be for the good of the people or tend to the preservation of the cause and interest so long contended for."*

The required recognition, was a brief engagement without any oath, pledging their word to be faithful to the Protector and Commonwealth, and not to propose or consent to alter the government "as it is settled in a single person and a parliament." About one hundred and forty members signed this instrument the same day, and three hundred in all shortly afterwards,—some of them however with a mental reservation,—but Bradshaw and the determined republicans scornfully turned away from a parliament trammelled by any check on its unlimited sway. Perhaps had the Protector exercised less faith in the common sense of a parliament, and demanded of them at the first some such oath or promise of allegiance as was thus imposed on them after a time, they might have set to work according to the ordinary duties of parliaments, instead of insisting on reconsidering all in the spirit of parliamentary philosophy, and manufacturing a new form of constitutional government for the state. As it was, however, they did little else during their whole sitting. Carlyle remarks in alluding to the diurnal report of their proceedings by Guibon Goddart, member for Lynn;—" Goddart's report of this parliament is distinct

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 305.

enough; brief, and not without some points of interest; 'the misfortune is,' says one commentator, 'he does not give us *names*.' Alas, a much greater misfortune is, the parliament itself is hardly worth naming! It did not prove a successful parliament;—it held on by mere constitution-building; and effected, so to speak, nothing. Respectable pedant persons; never doubting but the ancient sacred sheepskins would serve for the new time, which also has its sacredness; thinking, full surely, constitutional logic was the thing England now needed of them! Their history shall remain blank to the end of the world. 'I have read their debates, and counsel no other man to do it. Wholly upon the 'institution of government,' modelling, new-modelling of that: endless anxious spider-webs of constitutional logic; vigilant checks, constitutional jealousies, &c. &c. To be forgotten by all creatures."*

The parliament sat out their five months—five lunar months at least—and then were summarily dismissed, leaving Cromwell to govern England in such manner that the ministers of the most powerful kingdoms of Europe were compelled to own that "the Lord Protector's government made England more formidable and considerable to all nations than it had ever been before."

To those who wish to understand Cromwell and this parliament aright, his speech at its dissolution is also well worth perusal; as indeed all his speeches are. They were no formal documents, prepared like modern kings' or republican presidents' speeches, and put into the chief ruler's hands, to read aloud according to use and wont. They were pieces of rugged, unpremeditated eloquence, dictated alone by the exigencies of the times, and the impulse of the moment. But while the first protectorate parliament was thus spending its five allotted months in fruitless debatings, incidents of no trifling moment were

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 207.



Oliver Cromwell at the Deathbed of his Mother.

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transpiring elsewhere. An accident by which Cromwell was thrown from his seat, when driving a team of horses in Hyde Park, presented to him by the Duke of Oldenburg, while it endangered his life, also revealed the fact that he carried a loaded pistol on his person; a sufficiently significant fact, but not greatly to be wondered at in an old soldier, whose life had already been set as a mark to the assassin's dagger. Of very different import is another private incident thus touchingly alluded to by Carlyle: "What a glimpse into the interior domesticities of the Protector household have we in the following brief note! Amid the darkness and blizzard dimness, one light beam, clear, radiant, mournfully beautiful, like the gleam of a sudden star, disclosing for a moment many things to us. On Friday, Secretary Thurloe writes incidentally: 'My Lord Protector's mother, of ninety-four years old, died last night. A little before her death she gave my Lord her blessing in these words: The Lord cause His face to shine upon you, and comfort you in all your adversities; and enable you to do great things for the glory of your Most High God, and to be a relief unto His people. My dear son, I leave my heart with thee. A good night!'—and therewith sank into her long sleep. Even so. Words of ours are but idle. Thou brave one, mother of a hero, farewell!—Ninety-four years old: the royalties of Whitehall, says Ludlow very credibly, were of small moment to her: at the sound of a musket she would often be afraid her son was shot; and could not be satisfied unless she saw him once a day at least. She, old, weak, wearied one, she cannot help him with his refractory Pedant parliaments, with his Anabaptist plotters, royalist assassins, and world-wide confusions; but she bids him, be strong, be comforted in God. And so good night! And in the still eternities and divine silences—Well, *are* they not divine?"*

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 309.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROTESTANTS OF THE VALLEYS OF PIEDMONT.

The proceedings of the first protectorate parliament filled every enemy of the Commonwealth with hope. Royalist, republican, and leveller plottings, army plottings, and the strangest combinations of levellers and cavaliers against the Protectorate, all showed how greatly the enemies of the government rejoiced in the wayward proceedings of parliament; and how fast new difficulties were gathering to impede the brave and indomitable energy of Cromwell. Charles Stuart had advanced to the Dutch coast ready to return to England. Hyde, his future Lord Chancellor, declared the restoration already as good as settled. But Cromwell was equal to the emergency. Firmly and patiently he strangled each successive plot as it ripened under his keen eye, and lodged the chief firebrands in the Tower and elsewhere, safe from further power of mischief and distraction. Insurrections of the most alarming and contradictory nature demanded of Cromwell some new and effective instrument for their suppression, and this he speedily devised by the appointment of major-generals, a kind of general rural magistracy and police, possessed of very extensive powers, and which Forster stigmatizes as a scheme of "atrocious despotism." Like a good many of Cromwell's proceedings, it was undoubtedly little sanctioned by any use-and-wont precedents. Nevertheless it worked no little good in that distracted time. By it all England was divided into ten districts, with a major-general to each. Each of them a man carefully selected for his known probity and courage, as well as for such sagacity as pointed him out as worthy of trust in such an emergency. "Their powers are un-

known to the English constitution I believe; but they are very necessary for the English Puritan nation at this time. With men of real wisdom, who do fear God and hate covetousness, when you can find such men, you may to some purpose intrust considerable powers!" So says Carlyle. It was in truth somewhat of Cromwell's method all along; and proved in his hands frequently one of the best methods that the people of England in that age had any experience of.

"If not *good*, yet best," might indeed very often be said of Cromwell's measures. It was no ideal scheme of abstract perfection in the art of government that he aimed at bringing into play; no piece of pure ideal republicanism, admirably adapted to the kingdom of Utopia, which he was striving to force into fitness for the English nation. No such *good*, indeed! But its far better substitute, a practical governing scheme that really would work in good working-day fashion, in the strange clash of party creeds and opinions that united to form that English nation of the seventeenth century. It is not to be overlooked or concealed, that such a system was a wide departure in theory from what many in England had been contending for, in opposition to Charles. But the reader will judge very rashly if he conclude, with some writers, that "after the gallantest fight for liberty that had ever been fought by any nation in the world, England found herself trampled under foot by a military despot." Some acts of individual oppression did undoubtedly flow from this system. When assassination had been proclaimed as a virtue among royalists, and the readiest road to honour and rewards; when royalists and republicans were daily devising new schemes of treason against the existing government; and at a time, moreover, when the whole bonds by which society is ordinarily held together, had been rent asunder and thrown into dire confusion;—a stringent executive became indispensable under whatever form of

government it acted. Nevertheless, in wilful forgetfulness that the system was one of those inevitable results following in the train of nearly every revolution, Forster exclaims:—"All the vices of old kingly rule were nothing to what was now imposed upon her. Some restraint had still been kept on the worst of her preceding sovereigns; now she found herself hopeless and helpless, her faith in all that she once held noblest broken, and her spirits unequal to any further struggle. Besides this, there was stealing upon her, in gradual but certain progress, a vile hypocrisy and habit of falsehood, which even good men found it necessary to sanction and endure, that some semblance of the mere pretences of a better nature might still be left to them, were it only to redeem the name of their sad degradation. Let royalty revisit them as speedily as it would, it could bring nothing back for which they might not gladly exchange all that they now endured. What was the innocent and partial tax of ship-money to an all but universal decimation? What were agonies and mutilations by the Star Chamber to wholesale murders and executions by high courts of justice? What was an open profligacy worse than a secret lie? What the arrest of five members of the House of Commons to the utter violation and destruction of every privilege parliament possessed, and even of the very form and name of its rights and its immunities? The true cause of the death of Charles I. was his resistance to the sacred principle of popular representation. He laid down his head upon the block, because he broke violently, and in succession, three English parliaments. Oliver Cromwell had now merited, far more richly, that self-same doom; for he had committed in circumstances of greater atrocity, the self-same sin."*

Royalty did revisit England speedily enough, and brought back with it what should have silenced such a course of reasoning in one who freely acknowledges

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 305.

the errors and wrongs heaped by Charles I. on England. With more justice Vaughan remarks:—"Concerning the domestic government of Cromwell, it may, in brief, be said, that arbitrary and severe as it sometimes was towards those who were influenced by a fixed hostility to his power, it was, on the whole, as just and humane as would have been found practicable in circumstances retaining so little of the regularity belonging to ordinary times. It is easy to show that Cromwell, as Protector, did not always act according to those great provisions of the constitution which the civil war had been prosecuted to secure; but there is a great want of intelligence, or of honesty, in the reasoning which represents his altered conduct, in times so altered, as so much clear proof of his apostacy from the cause of freedom."*

The difference between the despotism of Charles and that of Cromwell, was this very simple, but altogether fundamental one. The course of government which Charles attempted to pursue, inevitably tended to effect the complete subjugation of the constitution to the prerogative of the crown, and if unchecked for a single generation must have blotted out every relic of the liberty of Englishmen, rendering the King of England as absolute, and the people as abject, as the ruler and subjects of Spain; while it had already sufficed to degrade both beneath the contempt of every European rival. The government of Cromwell, on the contrary, while it won the honour or the fear, of its most powerful and despotic foes, and made itself the head and the champion of Protestant Europe, established principles of toleration and liberty of conscience in England, which were before unknown, and have never since been eradicated. Charles, in a word, legislated for himself; Cromwell for the people; and the gradual change in the estimation of each, proves already the power of great and noble principles to work out their results.

* Vaughan's Protectorate, p xcvii.

Of the foreign policy of Cromwell, in which Milton bore so conspicuous a share, a very slight sketch may suffice. It is altogether such as every Englishman may be proud of. Not an iota of the honours due to a crowned head would he dispense with, when negotiating, as the Protector of England, with the proudest monarchs of Europe. Spain yielded with little hesitation to accord to him the same style as was claimed by her own haughty monarchs; but Louis of France sought, if possible, some compromise. His first letter was addressed to "His Most Serene Highness Oliver, Lord Protector, &c.," but Cromwell refused to receive it. The more familiar title of "Cousin," was in like manner rejected, and Louis and his crafty minister, the Cardinal Mazarin, were compelled to concede to him the wonted mode of address between sovereigns—"To our dear Brother Oliver." "What," exclaimed Louis to his minister, "shall I call this base fellow my brother?" "Aye," rejoined his astute adviser, "or your father, if it will gain your ends!" His influence with Mazarin, and other seemingly most intractable opponents, was soon brought to bear for the noblest ends. On the 3d of June, 1655, the sad news reached England that the Protestants of Piedmont were subjected to the sternest persecutions by the Duke of Savoy, having no means of escape offered to them but the abandonment of their faith. Churches filled with the wretched fugitives were given to the flames. Whole families were put to the sword, or hunted down in the Savoy Alps like beasts of prey, and men, women, and children hurled over the cliffs. The most revolting atrocities were perpetrated on these sufferers for conscience' sake, by the soldiers who were sent to drive them into banishment, or compel them to apostatize by horrible tortures. Milton's sonnet is known to all. It only embodies the indignant feeling that prevailed throughout England, when the people learned of the sufferings of their Protestant brethren. Cromwell took up a position in

which policy can hardly be said to have had a part. It was a noble and generous stand for the oppressed, such as England will never cease to be proud of; such as may make every reader who remembers it was the act of a British ruler, proudly claim the affinity of a common country, and say "I too am a Briton!" Cromwell was moved to tears when he learned of the sufferings of the people of the valleys. He sent immediately the sum of L.2000 from his own purse, to aid the poor exiles, and appointed a day of humiliation to be held throughout the kingdom, and a general collection to be made on their behalf. The people heartily responded to this call, and testified their sympathy with their oppressed brethren, by raising the sum of L.40,000 for distribution among them.

At this very time a treaty with France had been matured, after long and tedious negotiation. One demand after another had been conceded to Cromwell by Louis and his crafty adviser, the Cardinal Mazarin. Milton had conducted the negotiation to a successful issue, and the French Ambassador waited with the treaty ready for signature, when Cromwell learned of the sufferings of the Vaudois. He forthwith despatched an ambassador on their behalf to the Court of Turin, and refused to sign the treaty with France till their wrongs were redressed. The French Ambassador was astonished and indignant. He remonstrated with Cromwell, and urged that the question bore no connection with the terms of the treaty; nor could his sovereign interfere on any plea with the subjects of an independent state. Mazarin took even bolder ground. He did not conceal his sympathy with the efforts of the Duke of Savoy to coerce these Protestant *rebels*—declared his conviction, that in truth, "the Vaudois had inflicted a hundred times worse cruelties on the Catholics than they had suffered from them;" and altogether took up a very high and haughty position. Cromwell remained unmoved. New protestations met with no better reception.

He told his Majesty of France, in reply to his assurances of the impossibility of his interfering, that he had already allowed his own troops to be employed as the tools of the persecutors; which, though something very like giving his Christian Majesty the lie, was not without its effect. Cromwell would not move from the sacred duty he had assumed to himself, as the defender of the persecuted Protestants of Europe. The French Ambassador applied for an audience to take his leave, and was made welcome to go. Louis and Mazarin had both to yield to his wishes, at last, and became the unwilling advocates of the *heretics of the Valleys*. On the interference of the King of France, the Duke of Savoy was forced to grant an amnesty to the Vaudois, and restore to them their ancient privileges. Many attempts were afterwards made to set at nought this treaty, but while Cromwell lived these persecuted descendants of the Waldenses:

'Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our father s worshipp d stocks and stones,'

were never without a champion, ready at every sacrifice, to turn aside from them the sword of the destroyer, and to protect the weak and defenceless remnant from the malevolence of their enemies. But the prejudiced narration of Clarendon may better illustrate the effect of Cromwell's policy on those who were incapable of appreciating the high principles that influenced his conduct, even than the impartial narrations of later historians. "To reduce three nations," says that historian, "which perfectly hated him, to an entire obedience to all his dictates; to awe and govern those nations by an army that was undevoted to him and wished his ruin; was an instance of a very prodigious address. But his greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad. It was hard to discover which feared him most, France, Spain, or the low countries, where his friendship was current at the value he put upon it. As they did all sacrifice their honour and

their interests to his pleasure, so there is nothing he could have demanded that either of them would have denied him. To manifest which there needs only two instances. The first is when those of the Valley of Lucerne had unwarily rebelled against the Duke of Savoy, which gave occasion to the Pope, and the neighbour princes of Italy, to call and solicit for their extirpation, and their prince positively resolved upon it. Cromwell sent his agent to the Duke of Savoy, a prince with whom he had no correspondence or commerce, and so engaged the Cardinal, and even terrified the Pope himself, without so much as doing any grace to the English Roman Catholics, (nothing being more usual than his saying 'that his ships in the Mediterranean should visit Civita Vecchia, and that the sound of his cannon should be heard in Rome,') that the Duke of Savoy thought it necessary to restore all that he had taken from them, and did renew all those privileges they had formerly enjoyed, and newly forfeited.

"The other instance of his authority was yet greater and more incredible. In the city of Nismes, which is one of the fairest in the province of Languedoc, and where those of the religion do most abound, there was a great faction at that season, when consuls, who are the chief magistrates, were to be chosen. Those of the reformed religion had the confidence to set up one of themselves for that magistracy, which they of the Roman religion resolved to oppose with all their power. The dissension between them made so much noise, that the intendant of the province, who is the supreme minister in all civil affairs throughout the whole province, went thither to prevent any disorder that might happen. When the day of election came, those of the reformed religion possessed themselves, with many armed men, of the townhouse, where the election was to be made. The magistrates sent to know what their meaning was; to which they answered, 'they were there to give their voices for the

choice of the new consuls, and to be sure that the election should be fairly made.' The bishop of the city, the intendant of the province, with all the officers of the church, and the present magistrates of the town, went together in their robes to be present at the election, without any suspicion that there would be any force used. When they came near the gate of the townhouse, which was shut, and they supposed would be opened when they came, they within poured out a volley of musket-shot upon them, by which the dean of the church, and two or three of the magistrates of the town, were killed upon the place, and very many others wounded, whereof some died shortly after. The court was glad of the occasion; and resolved that this provocation, in which other places were not involved, and which nobody could excuse, should warrant all kind of severity in that city, even to the pulling down their temples, and expelling many of them for ever out of the city; which, with the execution and forfeiture of many of the principal persons, would be a general mortification to all of the religion in France, with whom they were heartily offended; and a part of the army was forthwith ordered to march towards Nismes, to see this executed with the utmost rigour.

"Those of the religion in the town were quickly sensible into what condition they had brought themselves; and sent, with all possible submission, to the magistrates to excuse themselves, and to impute what had been done to the rashness of particular men, who had no order for what they did. The magistrates answered, 'that they were glad they were sensible of their miscarriage; but they could say nothing upon the subject till the King's pleasure should be known, to whom they had sent a full relation of all that had passed.' The others very well knew what the King's pleasure would be; and forthwith sent an express, one Moulins, a Scotchman, who had lived many years in that place and in Montpellier, to Cromwell,

to desire his protection and interposition. The express made so much haste, and found so good a reception the first hour he came, that Cromwell, after he had received the whole account, bade him 'refresh himself after so long a journey, and he would take such care of his business that, by the time he came to Paris, he should find it despatched;' and that night sent away another messenger to his ambassador Lockhart; who, by the time Moulins came thither, had so far prevailed with the Cardinal, that orders were sent to stop the troops which were upon their march towards Nismes; and, within few days after, Moulins returned with a full pardon and amnesty from the King, under the great seal of France, so fully confirmed with all circumstances that there was never farther mention made of it, but all things passed as if there had never been any such thing; so that nobody can wonder that his memory remains still in those parts, and with those people, in great veneration.

"He would never suffer himself to be denied any thing he ever asked of the Cardinal, alleging, 'that the people would not be otherwise satisfied;' which the Cardinal bore very heavily, and complained of to those with whom he would be free. One day he visited Madam Turenne; and, when he took his leave of her, she, according to her custom, besought him to continue gracious to the churches. Whereupon the Cardinal told her 'that he knew not how to behave himself: if he advised the King to punish and suppress their insolence, Cromwell threatened him to join with the Spaniard; and, if he showed any favour to them, at Rome they accounted him an heretic.'"

The proceedings the Cardinal did adopt, leave no room to doubt the conclusion he finally arrived at, as to whether it was most advisable to attend to the threats of the Pope of Rome, or of the Lord Protector of England.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KINGSHIP.

AMONG the major-generals appointed by Cromwell, his own son Henry was nominated for Ireland, with the command of all the forces there. He was afterwards advanced to the office of Lord Deputy, and proved a most important auxiliary to the Protector. He indeed was the true inheritor of his father's indomitable energy and genius, and had not the prejudices of hereditary succession and primogeniture stood in the way, he, as the successor of Oliver Cromwell in the office of the protectorate, might have established the Commonwealth of England on a permanent basis, and saved England, and Scotland too, from the necessity of once more proving the ineradicable vices of the doomed race of the Stuarts. But it was not so to be. The brave Oliver had to do battle alone in that generation against the discordant hydra of despotism and anarchy, and the men who, timidly measuring his footsteps, wrought for us the "revolution settlement," with its forms and shadows of a popular government, could not even appreciate their own "Dutch William," much less our true English Oliver. To those who can read the following little fragment of a letter to his son-in-law, Lord Fleetwood, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, believing it to be sincere, and from the heart of him, whom his worst detractors have never dared deny the expression of the warmest domestic affections, it will open up a glimpse of the terrible sea of strife through which the Protector of the Commonwealth had to struggle on.

Whitehall, 22d June, 1655.

"DEAR CHARLES,

"I write not often: at once I desire thee to know I most dearly love thee; and indeed my

heart is plain to thee, as thy heart can well desire; let nothing shake thee in this. The wretched jealousies that are among us, and the spirit of calumny turn all into gall and wormwood. My heart is for the people of God, that the Lord knows, and will in due time manifest: yet thence are my wounds;—which, though it grieves me, yet, through the grace of God, doth not discourage me totally. Many good men are repining at every thing; though, indeed, very many good are well satisfied, and satisfying daily. The will of the Lord will bring forth good in due time."*

In the month of September, 1656, an English parliament once more assembled at Westminster, in obedience to the summons of the Lord Protector. Admiral Blake was on the ocean, fighting with Spain, the great enemy of England's Protestantism, and it had become essential that Cromwell should obtain supplies with which to carry on the war. He, too, as well as Charles, is driven by such necessities, to consult with the people's representatives. The long parliament had endeavoured before to get satisfaction from Spain, but their envoy was assassinated by the servants of their royalist rivals, and his murderers protected by *sanctuary*—a mode of protection which appeared to the Puritans of England in that age even worse than the thing itself. But now, to add to other grievances, Spain had espoused the interests of Charles Stuart. But that is as nothing compared to the ineradicable enmity of the Spaniard to Protestant England. "Though I seem," says Cromwell in his speech to the new parliament, "to be all this while upon the justice of the business, yet my desire is, to let you see the dangers this nation stands in. All the honest interests, yea all interests of the Protestants in Germany, Denmark, Helvetia, and the Cantons, and all the interests in Christendom are the same as yours.

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 336.

If you succeed, if you succeed well, and act well, and be convinced what is God's interest, and prosecute it, you will find that you act for a great many who are God's own. Therefore I say that your danger is from the common enemy abroad, who is the head of the papal interest, the head of the anti-Christian interest." In the same speech Cromwell contemptuously alludes in passing to his own personal dangers; attempts to seduce his officers from their allegiance, for the purpose of his assassination; "foolish designs" to blow up the room where he slept with gunpowder. "We can tell you the things are true, but," adds he, "these are persons not worth naming," unless in so far as the schemers for a Spanish invasion, and the ringleaders in these desperate projects "are none other than your old enemies the Papists and cavaliers."

Dismissing these questions, and returning to the internal administration of government, Cromwell resumes the grand principle towards which he ever struggled—that of true toleration and liberty of conscience, a thing peculiarly difficult to work out in that age, and which proved not even conceivable to the advisers of a restoration-government. "Men who believe in Jesus Christ," says Cromwell, addressing the parliament,* "that is the form that gives being to true religion, namely to faith in Christ, and walking in a profession answerable to that faith—men who believe the remission of sins through the blood of Christ, and free justification by the blood of Christ; who live upon the grace of God: those men who are certain they are so, they are members of Jesus Christ, and are to him the apple of His eye. Whoever hath this faith, let his form be what it will, he walking peaceably, without prejudice to others under other forms, it is a debt due to God and Christ, and he will require it, if that Christian may not enjoy his liberty. If a man of one form will be tramp-

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 444.

ling upon the heels of another form; if an Independent for example, will despise him who is under baptism, and will revile him, and reproach, and provoke him, I will not suffer it in him. If, on the other side, those of the anabaptist judgment shall be censuring the godly ministers of the nation who profess under that of Independency, or if those that profess under Presbytery shall be reproaching or speaking evil of them, traducing and censuring of them, as I would not be willing to see the day when England shall be in the power of the Presbytery to impose upon the consciences of others that profess faith in Christ,—so I will not endure any reproach to them. But God give us hearts and spirits to keep things equal. Which truly I must profess to you, hath been my temper. I have had some boxes on the ear, and rebukes, on the one hand and on the other; some censuring me for Presbytery; others as an inletter to all the sects and heresies of the nation. I have borne my reproach, but I have, through God's mercy, not been unhappy in hindering any one religion to impose upon another." And then, after referring to the numerous petitions he had received from the Presbyterians that "they may have liberty and protection in the worshipping of God according to their own judgments," he adds: "And I hope I gave them fair and honest answers. And if it shall be found to be the civil magistrate's real endeavour to keep all professing Christians in this relation to one another; not suffering any to say or do what will justly provoke the others, I think he that would have more liberty than this is not worthy of any."

It is worth notice, in passing, that Cromwell had an idea of the liberty of faith somewhat different from most men either then or now. One detects in him on all great occasions that instinctive self-reliance which is ever a characteristic of true genius; and so was it in dealing with this most difficult problem. He made himself the

"defender of the faith," and "head of the Church," in a strangely different sense from that of "our *most religious* and gracious King Charles." He refers them with no little satisfaction to the working of the Commission of Triers and Expurgators, and to their influence on the learning and piety of the ministry of England,—an influence undeniable, notwithstanding the few cases brought against them in which they overstepped the bounds of their commission. He reminds them of the time, not many years past, when "it was a shame to be a Christian in this nation," and glances too at what might yet return to England;—we well know what did return. But the reader must study the whole speech for himself. Like all Cromwell's unpremeditated but nervous utterances, it is full of meaning, and must be studied by those who would understand his character and policy aright. In good truth, "he who would see Oliver, will find more of him here than in most of the history-books yet written about him."

Cromwell, however, with such fightings within and without, and on all hands, had resolved that there should be something else done by this second parliament than debating about sanctioning the form of government, and in his usual very summary fashion he excluded the whole body of extreme republicans, or resolute opponents of the existing government, knowing there was no hope of the parliament ever making even a beginning, if leavened and soured by such an over-zealous opposition. The parliament, thus constituted, declared for the policy and justice of the war against Spain; annulled by special acts every pretension of the Stuarts to the crown of England; voted supplies to the amount of L.400,000; and otherwise strengthened the hands of the Protector. Cromwell, however, had to interfere with them on a very different subject. All his exhortations to the genuine toleration of all sincere worshippers, who were willing to live at

peace, could not stay this parliament from the most intolerant assaults on sundry poor fanatics, whose extravagant pretensions to inspiration and even a sort of divine incarnation, appeared to them well worth debating upon for months, to the exclusion of nearly every other consideration, and directing the whole artillery of law and parliament not so much for their overthrow as for their punishment; while the interests of the nation were left to wait till a more convenient season.

The most memorable proceeding of this parliament, however, on which comments enough have been penned by writers of every class and party, was the offering to the Lord Protector the title of King. It is a fact more memorable, perhaps, because of the comment and mystification it has given rise to, than for any great significance in the thing itself. Most writers have been at no little labour to exhibit it as the summit of this *crafty traitor's* ambition; the great prize for which he sacrificed conscience and principle, and the interests of his people; and which at length eluded his grasp, leaving him a baffled and mortified schemer, whose ambitious projects had come to nought. What did it really amount to? To the people it was something more than a mere name. The sum of the arguments in favour of Cromwell adopting the title may be thus stated: the title of Protector was a novelty both to the laws and to the people, and unless the holder of it was supposed to exercise the office and possess the privileges of a king, it became requisite that a minutely elaborate definition of the rights and prerogatives of the office should be made; whereas, the theory of kingly government being inwoven alike into the laws and the feelings of the nation, the adoption of that title by Cromwell would at once establish his office on the ancient basis of the laws of England, clearly defined and well understood by all. It was moreover thought by some, that if Cromwell were inaugurated into the office

and the title, from which the hereditary heir of Charles had been excluded, it would more effectually establish the permanent character of the divorce by which the Stuart race had been cut off from the succession. Cromwell felt all this, while he also felt that so far as he himself was concerned, it was only as *a feather in his cap*. In one of his speeches on the subject he says, "all turns on the expediency of this name of kingship. Truly I had rather, if it were the original question,—*which I hope is altogether out of the question*,—I had rather any other name." As Carlyle very pithily paraphrases it, "you do not pretend that I still need to be made Protector by you, or by any other creature!" As far as the substance of power and kingship was concerned, Cromwell felt that he had needed no one to give it to him at first, and if he did not choose to lay it down he did not greatly fear the attempts of any one to wrest it from him. He was King of the English Commonwealth far more absolutely than ever Charles had been, with all his vaunted prerogative, and divine right to rule. This title of kingship was therefore only a name; but it was a name not altogether meaningless or powerless; Cromwell knew by sad experience that

"Men are but children of a larger growth."

He knew that there were thousands with whom this name would work as a talisman; while there also were others to whom its substitute, *Protector*, was no less sub stantial a toy. To me it seems simple enough to account for all Cromwell's hesitation about this paltry question of kingship on such a principle. What hesitation was there in this man when there was a king to go to war with,—to dethrone,—to doom to the block? None! But placed at the head of a nation distracted with doubts and jealousies of all sorts, and at the very time when a Fifth Monarchy-mustering had gathered around a banner blazoned with the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and on the

very outskirts of London had proclaimed King Jesus, whose reign was to be the signal for all carnal sovereignties coming to an end:—at this very time, and under these circumstances, Cromwell is asked to remove a stumblingblock out of the way, by the simple process of being henceforth called not Protector but King. His answer is candid enough;—*Only show me that such a change will be acceptable, and call me parish-constable if you will!*

"I am a man," says he, addressing the committee appointed by parliament to urge his acceptance of the title; —"I am a man standing in the place I am in; which place I undertook not so much out of hope of doing any good as out of a desire to prevent mischief and evil, which I did see was imminent on the nation. I say, we were running headlong into confusion and disorder, and would necessarily have run into blood; and I was passive to those who desired me to undertake the place which I now have. A place, I say, not so much of doing good, which a man may lawfully, if he deal deliberately with God anu nis own conscience; a man may lawfully desire a place to do good in! I profess I had not that apprehension, when I undertook the place, that I could so much do good; but I did think I might prevent imminent evil. —And therefore I am not contending for one name compared with another;—and therefore have nothing to answer to any arguments that were used for preferring the name kingship to protectorship. For I should almost think any name were better than my name; and I should altogether think any person fitter than I am for such business; and I compliment not, God knows it! But this I should say, that I do think, you, in the settling of the peace and liberties of this nation, which cries as loud upon you as ever nation did for somewhat that may beget a consistence, ought to attend to that; otherwise the nation will fall in pieces! And in that, so far as I can, I

am ready to serve not as a king but as constable if you like! For truly I have, as before God, often thought that I could not tell what my business was, nor what I was in the place I stood in, save comparing myself to a good constable set to keep the peace of the parish. And truly this hath been my content and satisfaction in the troubles I have undergone, that you yet have peace." *

It seems conceivable enough that Cromwell never had so difficult a question to solve; it was one altogether out of his course. He had dealt all his life not with names and forms but with things. The King had been to him as any other man, when the sword was drawn, and the questions between him and the nation were set on such an issue; yet here was a question about a name, which yet he felt was not altogether a name, if it might suffice to satisfy the people for whom he had already secured the substance and the spirit of kingship. He found, however, that it was certain to dissatisfy some of his old friends, while it was but an experiment with others. "The providence of God," said he, "has laid aside this title of king. It hath been done by issue of as great deliberation as ever was in a nation,—and therefore I will not resume it!" On Friday the 8th of May, 1657, Cromwell gave his final answer to the House with unwonted brevity, and at length, distinctly declining to undertake the government with the title of King. In contrast to this view of the case one very brief extract will suffice. "Beneath the careless delays," says Forster,† "and apparently indifferent movements of Cromwell, there then lay, could the truth have been unfolded, a bitter agony of pride and mortification of heart beyond any that his worst enemy or victim could have desired to see working within him. A mean and spiritless slave to the vilest passions of overwrought ambition, he stood there within sight of the

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 525.

† Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 354.

glittering bauble for which he had perilled so much, and yet dared not affect to see it; but would stand gazing on his Barbary horse, or talk of a toy, or sneer about a rattle, or laugh at a feather in a man's cap, or do anything to cover the fever of that imbecile passion, incapable of its own desire, which raged in his heart. So to the last he trifled; and at the last, the republican officers, taking courage from his cowardice, ventured one bold step and dashed down his hopes for ever."

Between such conflicting views of the great Protector's character the reader must decide; if he adhere to the latter, he may well exclaim how mean and despicable a passion must ambition be, that could sink so great a man to such a depth of degradation.

While this war of words had been going on at Westminster, and the people's representatives had been devising for them, with sore debatings, this grand panacea of a NAME, Admiral Blake had fought his last fight, and won his final victory; annihilating the Spanish Plate-fleet; silencing their forts and castles at Santa Cruz; sinking and burning their war-ships, though moored under the bristling cannon of what they had deemed impregnable forts, and manned and armed with more powerful equipments than his own fleet. The brave and gallant Blake had smitten the Spaniard a deadly blow. Worn out with toil and sickness, he turned his prow homeward,—received on the voyage the congratulations, the thanks, and the valued token of appreciation of his noble service,—a jewel valued at L.500,—sent him by the Protector; reached even in sight of his native land,—and then died, in his fifty-ninth year, his life spent on behalf of his country. Noble men laid him,—whom a grateful country might well style, as Spain did the great Genoese, *The Admiral!*—amid England's mighty dead, in Westminster Abbey, there to rest, as it seemed, till summoned by the trumpet whose voice shall awake the dead: but to the

eternal infamy of the restoration-government, the remains of the bravest of England's admirals, who had won for her the sovereignty of the ocean, were flung out with infamy from their recent grave, to gratify the pitiful revenge of a sycophant court against men who, while living, they had trembled to look upon.

CHAPTER XIX.

CROMWELL'S PEERAGE.

CROMWELL'S second parliament closed its session with every mark of cordial sympathy and co-operation with the Protector. They could not get him crowned King as they had desired, but instead thereof he was installed anew in his Protectorship with the most solemn and fitting ceremonials, emblematic at once of the character of his sovereign office, and of the popular recognition of him as their head. The Lord Protector standing on the dais in Westminster Hall, under the cloth of state, received from the Speaker, in the name of the parliament, a robe of purple velvet, which the Speaker, with the assistance of some of the chief officers of state, put upon him. The Speaker then delivered to him the Bible, richly bound, girt the sword of state upon his Highness, and delivered into his hand the sceptre of massive gold, after which he addressed him in name of the parliament, setting forth the significance of these several symbols of authority and obligation; which were further enforced by his administering to the Lord Protector the oath of office. The officiating minister then solemnly commended by prayer his Highness, the parliament, the council, the forces by land and sea, and the whole government and people of the three nations, to the blessing and protection of God. The ambassadors

from the chief courts of Europe, the chief dignitaries of the state, with the members of the parliament, and a vast concourse of the people, crowded the hall, and gave countenance to this renewal of the mutual bond between the Protector and the protected, the chief magistrate and the people. At its close the trumpets sounded, and the hall rang with the acclamations of the people. What more could the golden crown have been to this mighty ruler than a feather in his cap?

The death of the great sea king, Admiral Blake, did not stay the terrors of England's name to the Spaniards. She had other sons capable of achieving victories. Dunkirk was wrested from their hands, as much by the policy of Cromwell as by the valour of his captains, though only that his *legitimate* successor, Charles Stuart, might win national disgrace and personal infamy by its barter for a paltry sum to waste on his own pleasures!

All things indicated an approach to something like a settlement of the government on a safe and permanent basis. The relations with foreign courts were such as England had rarely before enjoyed: the intercourse with the people's representatives seemed no less promising. But Cromwell's warfare was to end only with his life. On the 28th of January, 1658, the parliament re-assembled, for its second session. When the "petition and advice" was presented by this parliament to the Protector during its first session, it was distinctly stipulated that he should accept or reject the whole. It formed the carefully digested scheme of government by which these legislators hoped to put an end to all the grievances and sufferings of England; and it was only by its acceptance in a perfect and unmutilated form, that they could anticipate the realization of so desirable an end.

The first article of this grand constitutional scheme for remodelling the English government was that which invited the Protector of the Commonwealth to take on him

the supreme government, with the title of King. This article, as we have seen, Cromwell rejected, after long deliberation. Nevertheless, the new scheme for constitutional government was not abandoned. Cromwell, with whom, his biographers assure us, the idea of kingship originated, was far more bent on the establishment of the Commonwealth on a permanent footing, than on any personal aggrandizement, or increase of absolute power. He longed to share the duties and responsibilities of government with the free representatives of the people; but he knew too well the fickleness of popular favour to throw to them the reins of government, and leave to fiery demagogues, fanatical enthusiasts, and the interested or hired agents of royalty to turn back the English nation into the very sloughs and quicksands from which he had so hardly rescued it. The prorogued parliament re-assembled reinforced, according to the terms of the petition and advice, by upwards of a hundred members, including the great body of intractable republicans whom Cromwell had excluded from its first session, as the only means by which to enable the remaining members to proceed with the ordinary business of parliament. To counteract this dangerous leaven, however, the petition and advice of the parliament had stipulated, in its second and third articles, that a parliament should assemble once in three years, at farthest, to consist of *two houses*, and that no member legally chosen to represent the people in parliament, should be excluded from his seat by any authority except by the judgment and consent of that house of which he was a member. By another article of the same scheme, the nomination of the members of this new House of Peers was vested in the chief magistrate, with the approval of parliament; with the further condition that its members were not to be less than forty, or more than seventy, and that no vacancy caused by the death of its original members, should be filled up but by the consent of this Upper House.

This novel House of Peers, as constituted by the nominations of Cromwell, consisted of sixty-one members, selected by the Protector with such wisdom as could be brought to bear on so delicate a task, and from the materials that were available for him. That seventeenth century, however, presented no more difficult problem for its ablest man to work out, than the re-construction of a House of Peers, which, without the prestige of ancestral glory and hereditary rights, should undertake the invidious task of forming a counterpoise and check to the representatives of the people, so soon after they had refused to acknowledge the rights of the old peerage of England, with all the imposing associations of high descent and historic memories. In new states or recently enfranchised colonies, such things may be possible. The greatest men among them are the peers of their age, and the founders of an illustrious descent, but in an old country such as England, and in an age in which faith in the divinity of hereditary kingship retained such a hold that the restored monarchy brought back with it the miraculous power of touching for the king's evil,—in such an age the attempt to re-construct a *new House of Peers* was nearly as chimerical as to try to call into existence from a fresh hoard of acorns the forests wherewith to build armaments like those in which Blake had sustained the honour of England and the glory of the Commonwealth's flag.

Cromwell summoned to his Upper House, in addition to eight of the ancient peers, his two sons, Richard and Henry, sundry baronets and gentlemen of old family and fortune, several of the leading members of his council, and the chief officers of his army; some of the old members of the long parliament, with a few distinguished lawyers and civilians. The selection was probably as good as it was possible to make under the circumstances; but England, which so soon after saw without complaint

the offspring of court-strumpets elevated to the highest dignities of her peerage by a restoration monarchy, could not endure that an assembly of proved men, selected by the greatest statesman and soldier of the age, should assume any such privilege or honour. Even old Lord Warwick, though heretofore no grudging partizan of Cromwell, deemed his old hereditary honours degraded by being brought in contact with this novel peerage. "He could not," he said, "sit in the same assembly with Colonel Hewson, who had been a shoe-maker, and Colonel Pride, who had been a drayman;" and had Cromwell himself offered to share with these hereditary legislators their ancestral inheritance of honours, he would no doubt have been found equally unworthy of such dignity, "who had been a farmer and brewer!"

Had the Lord Protector been able to assemble, with this new Upper House, no other commoners than those who had enacted the Petition and Advice in accordance with which they were called into being, harmonious relationships might have been established between them, and the privileges of the ancient peerage secured to the new lords without question. But the clause in the new constitutional scheme which stipulated for the return of the very members who had debated the sanctioning of the Protector's own authority and right to summon them, destroyed every chance of this scheme ever receiving fair trial; more especially as he suffered, in addition to this, the loss of nearly forty thorough supporters, or impartial and favourably inclined men of moderate opinions, whom he had transferred to the new Upper House.

On the 28th of January, 1658, the Commons were summoned by the Usher of the Black Rod to the House of Peers, where Cromwell addressed them from an elevated seat, surmounted with a canopy of state, beginning his speech according to ancient custom, "My Lords, and gentlemen of the House of Commons." His address was

unusually brief, and the newly constituted parliament of Lords and Commons was dismissed to business, and to the trial of these novel, and, as it proved, irreconcilable elements, which had been called into being with so much labour and anxious discussion.

The history of this abortive peerage is soon told. Scott, Haslerig, and others of the restored republicans, employed all their eloquence and talents in bringing it into discredit, and soon influenced a sufficient number of the fickle Commons, by whom the scheme had been sanctioned, to secure a decided majority, who distinctly refused to acknowledge the second estate as a House of Peers. The very discussion of the question, almost of necessity involved its extinction, at that early stage. It was the creature of the Commons, no less than of the Lord Protector, having been called into existence in accordance with their petition and advice; and a divided popular assembly was called upon to concede to a rival convention, whose constitution was independent of the voice of the people, equal rights with themselves, and the power of negativing at all times their decisions. It was the old question of sanctioning the government, revived in a far more unmanageable form. Whenever the Lords sent a message to the Commons, the latter instead of returning them an answer, resumed the discussion as to how they were to address them; what name they were to concede to them; and what right of interference they were to allow them to possess in the deliberations of the representatives of the people of England. In these discussions the new Peers were spoken of in the most contemptuous terms, and the idea of their assuming the ancient privileges of the peerage scouted with every demonstration of indignation and ridicule.

Cromwell, indignant at this breach of faith on the part of the Commons, summoned the parliament to the Banqueting House, at Whitehall, on the 25th of January, 1658,

and addressed them with an earnestness of purpose suited to the exigencies of the period. Royalist plots and insurrections were afoot. A Spanish invasion, co-operating with a royalist insurrection, were in train; and the old foe of the Commonwealth, the Dutch Republic, had hired a fleet of ships wherewith to transport an army of Spaniards and Irish levies, by a hasty descent, to the English shore. The discontented, the fanatic, and the politico-religious enthusiasts of England were all rallying and devising fresh plots for the overthrow of order, and the establishment of all manner of rival absurdities, concocted in the heated brains of deluded or designing men.

Well might Cromwell feel indignant to see, at such a crisis, the new parliament tearing into tatters the whole fabric constructed under their own directions and advice, and wrestling in unending debate about names and forms, while the whole substance of true government was in danger of crumbling underneath them, but for his interposition. Breaking at once upon the subject, Cromwell exclaims in earnest, almost hopeless sorrow:—"The impression of the weight of those affairs and interests for which we are met together is such that I could not with a good conscience satisfy myself, if I did not remonstrate to you somewhat of my apprehensions of the state of the affairs of these nations; together with the proposal of such remedy as may occur, to the dangers now imminent upon us.

"I conceive the well-being, yea the being of these nations is now at stake. If God bless this meeting,—our tranquillity and peace may be lengthened out to us; if *otherwise*,—I shall offer it to your judgments and considerations, by the time I have done, whether there be, as to *men*, so much as a possibility of discharging that trust which is incumbent upon us for the safety and preservation of these *nations*! When I have told you what occurs to my thoughts, I shall leave it to such an operation

on your hearts as it shall please God Almighty to work upon you.

"I look upon this to be the great duty of my place; as being set on a watch-tower to see what may be for the good of these nations, and what may be for the preventing of evil; that so, by the advice of so wise and great a council as this, which hath in it the life and spirit of these nations, such good may be attained, and such evil, whatever it is, may be obviated. We shall hardly set our shoulders to this work, unless it shall please God to work some conviction upon our hearts that *there is need* of our most serious and best counsels at such a time as this is!—I have not prepared any such matter and rule of speech to deliver myself unto you, as perhaps might have been fitter for me to have done, and more serviceable for you in understanding me;—but shall only speak plainly and honestly to you out of such conceptions as it hath pleased God to set upon me.

"We have not been now four years and upwards in this government, to be totally ignorant of what things may be of the greatest concernment to us. Your dangers,—for that is the head of my speech,—are either with respect to affairs abroad and their difficulties, or to affairs at home and their difficulties. You are come now, as I may say, into the end of as great difficulties and straits as, I think, ever nation was engaged in.

"First, from abroad: What are the affairs, I beseech you, abroad? I thought the profession of the Protestant religion was a thing of well-being; and truly, in a good sense, so it is, and it is no more: though it be a very high thing, it is but a thing of well-being. But take it with all the complications of it, with all the concomitants of it, with respect had to the nations abroad,—I do believe, he that looks well about him, and considereth the estate of the Protestant affairs all Christendom over; he must needs say and acknowledge that the grand design now on foot,

in comparison with which all other designs are but low things, is, whether the Christian world shall be all Popery? Or, whether God hath a love to, and we ought to have a love to, and a brotherly fellow-feeling of, the interests of all the Protestant Christians in the world?"*

From this he proceeds to call their attention to the many dangers that beset them both on the continent and at home; and then puts the question to them if that is a time for discussing at their ease, whatever pleases them, and wasting their time in endless questions of precedence and form. Retracing the sixteen years of strife and dissensions through which they have passed, he calls to their mind the enjoyment of peace they at that moment have, and exclaims:—"Is not this a mighty blessing from the Lord of heaven? Shall we now be prodigal of time? Should any man, shall *we*, listen to delusions, to break and interrupt this peace? There is not any man that hath been true to this cause, as I believe you have been all, who can look for anything but the greatest rending and persecution that ever was in this world! I wonder how it can enter into the heart of man to undervalue these things; to slight peace and the gospel, the greatest mercy of God. We have peace and the gospel! Let us have one heart and soul; one mind to maintain the honest and just rights of this nation;—not to *pretend* to them, to the destruction of our peace, to the destruction of the nation! Really, pretend what we will, if you run into *another* flood of blood and war, the sinews of this nation being wasted by the last, it must sink and perish utterly. I beseech you, and charge you in the name and presence of God, and as before him, be sensible of these things, and lay them to heart! You have a day of fasting coming on. I beseech God touch your hearts and open your ears to this truth; and that you may be as deaf adders to stop your ears to

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 622.

all dissension; and may look upon them who would sow dissension, whoever they may be, as Paul saith to the church of Corinth, as I remember: '*Mark* such as cause divisions and offences,' and would disturb you from that foundation of peace you are upon, under any pretence whatsoever!"*

It was Cromwell's last appeal to the headstrong and perverse men who stood beside him, like the crew of a storm-girt ship, and while he clung to the rudder and held its head still before the wind, and piloted its course amid the breakers, the seamen that should have strained every nerve to second his endeavours, were discussing whether they could pull together in this common object, or whether it were not of more importance to heave certain of their rivals overboard, than to look to the safety of the barque on which their all depended.

There was little hope that any argument would influence the Commons in departing from the ground they had taken up. The republican party, to whom the very idea of an hereditary peerage was odious, cherished the opposition the more, from the indirect thrust it enabled them to make at the Protector himself. It was, in fact, none other than the old question of sanctioning the authority of the protectoral government, though in a disguised and more popular form; and it may readily be supposed that the recent discussions between the Protector and the pliant Commons as to the question of kingship, had no slight influence on the acrimonious zeal of his republican opponents, whatever effect the recollection of their share in the proposition may have had on the fickle renegades who now swelled the majority against the new Peers. The new estate, trusting to the influence of Cromwell's address on the intractable Commoners, renewed their messages to the Lower House, but with no better success. The answers of the Commons were purposely couched in the

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 641.

most contemptuous terms, and the discussions as to the limits of the privileges or rights that ought to be conceded to the Protector's peerage, rapidly merged into the more comprehensive and sweeping question—whether they should allow them to possess any rights or privileges at all.

The Commons were still engaged in this protracted and hopeless discussion, which had gone on for ten successive days, ever getting vaguer, more infinitely and more utterly senseless and intemperate, when the usher of the black rod appeared, and required their presence once more in the Upper House. They adjourned their debate to a more convenient season, and repairing to the chamber of the new House of Peers, listened once more to the unpremeditated but passionate eloquence of Cromwell. This last speech, addressed to the last parliament he was ever to meet—a speech well worthy of audience still by those who seek to understand Oliver Cromwell—thus begins:

"My Lords, and Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

"I had very comfortable expectations that God would make the meeting of this parliament a blessing: and the Lord be my witness, I desired the carrying on the affairs of the nation to these ends. The blessing which I mean, and which we ever climbed at, was mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace,—which I desired might be improved.

"That which brought me into the capacity I now stand in was the petition and advice given me by you, who in reference to the ancient constitution, did draw me to accept the place of Protector. There is not a man living can say I sought it: no, not a man nor woman treading upon English ground. But, contemplating the sad condition of these nations, relieved from an intestine war into a six or seven years' peace, I did think the nation happy therein! But to be petitioned thereunto, and advised by

you to undertake such a government, a burden too heavy for any creature; and this to be done by the House that then had the legislative capacity—certainly I did look that the same men who made the frame should make it good unto me! I can say in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth, I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, and have kept a flock of sheep, rather than undertaken such a government as this. But undertaking it by the advice and petition of you, I did look that you who had offered it unto me, should make it good."*

Carlyle exclaims with reference to this, in one of his eloquent parenthesis: "Yes, it had been infinitely quieter, healthier, freer. But it is gone for ever: no woodsides now, and peaceful nibbling sheep, and great still thoughts; and glimpses of God 'in the cool of the evening, walking among the trees;' nothing but toil and trouble, double, double, till one's discharge arrive, and the eternal portals open! Nay, even there, by your woodside, you would not be happy; not you,—with thoughts going down to the death kingdoms, and heaven so near you on this hand, and hell so near you on that. Nay, who would grudge a little temporary trouble, when he can do a large spell of eternal work, work that is true, and will last through all eternity!"†

After the touching exordium thus commented on, the Lord Protector very briefly insists on the co-operation which was implied in the position in which he and they stood to one another, and of the faithless breach of their compact of which they had been guilty. His language is brief and emphatic. He knows that traitors among them have counselled together the overthrow of the Protectorate, in defiance of their oath; have sought to sow dis-

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 646.

† Ibid, vol. ii. p. 647

affection in the army; have laboured to raise tumult and insurrection in the capital; have even accepted of commissions from Charles Stuart, and tried to enlist men in his name; all this, and more, he knows and tells them; and then exclaims: "What is like to come upon this, the enemy being ready to invade us, but even present blood and confusion? And if this be the end of your sitting, and this be your carriage, I think it high time that an end be put to your sitting. And I DO DISSOLVE THIS PARLIAMENT! And let God be judge between you and me."

Weak men, judging by mere forms of constitutional government, have looked upon this act of Cromwell as the crowning piece of treachery against the liberties of his country. Weak men have judged, and still judge so. Reader, I beseech you, if you would judge justly, study anew for yourself the facts, and not the mere prejudices and lies of the time. Consider what the insanest even of these republican opponents of the government owed to Cromwell. Did they not owe to him their rescue for a little longer from the gallows and the scaffold, which reached them so speedily after their Protector was at rest in his grave? Had England only been true to herself then, she would have needed no second revolution to rescue her from the restored yoke of Stuart tyranny. Scarcely a week after the dissolution of parliament, Hartlib, the friend of Milton, writing to Pell at Geneva, says: "Half an hour after my letter to Mr. Morland, I received the news of the parliament being dissolved. I durst not make another letter to signify the same, hoping also that some of the public persons would acquaint you with so sudden and great a matter; but believe it, it was of that necessity that, if their session had continued but two or three days longer, all had been in blood, both in city and country, upon Charles Stuart's account. An army of 20,000 might have appeared with an ugly petition, (for the re-establishing of Charles Stuart,) presuming they should

find a party amongst them; whilst another army of 10,000 men was landing in England, by the jealousy (to say no worse) of our good neighbours. Besides, there was another petition set on foot in the city for a commonwealth, which would have gathered like a snowball; but by the resolute sudden dissolving of the parliament, both these dangerous designs were mercifully prevented."*

The Protector made quick work of this mustering of rival opponents. Republican, royalist, fifth-monarchy, and fanatic leaders of all sorts, were speedily lodged in the Tower. Yet how terrible was his position; suspected by his friends, thwarted by petty adversaries of all sorts, hemmed in by conspiracies which he only counteracted by the most astonishing tact, and the fidelity of able and trusty servants; and living in daily anticipation of the assassin's dagger: how infinitely preferable would have been the quiet woodside with its flock of sheep! Yet even then Cromwell retained his magnanimity. The great heart could cope with all this malignant and perverse contradiction, and yet throb healthily as of old. The Marquis of Ormond, the Irish leader he had conquered before, came secretly to London while the parliament still sat, and lodging under close disguise in an obscure dwelling in Drury Lane, passed three weeks intriguing with parliamentary leaders, royalists, and republicans, for the restoration of Charles. Cromwell knew it all; but he could still be generous to an enemy, and sent Ormond's old friend, Broghill, to warn him that his plots were known. The Marquis returned with all conceivable haste to Charles at Bruges, and comforted him with the news that Cromwell had many enemies, but—that he was more than a match for them all.

Cromwell had no thirst for blood. He had fought with Ormond in his terrible campaign, and face to face as his foe, would have cut him down without a thought of hesi-

* Vaughan's Protectorate of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 442.

tation or doubt. But as a plotter for his old master's return, he would rather if possible scare him from his purpose than extinguish it with his blood. Yet when it seemed needful, he could be stern and inexorable enough. The leaders were scared away, and an end put to all thought of co-operation between Spanish or Irish allies and English cavaliers. Nevertheless, the City-royalists were resolved that all their plotting and arming should not go for nothing, the consequence of which was their total discomfiture, and the seizure and trial of Sir Henry Slingsby, and Dr. John Hewit, an Episcopal clergyman, who acquires some interest from the sympathy he excited in the breast of Cromwell's favourite and best loved daughter, Elizabeth;—a sympathy, however, altogether unavailing to rescue him from his fate.

The High Court of Justice sat in Westminster Hall on Tuesday, the 25th of May, 1658, constituted for the trial of these plotters. Slingsby and Hewit were condemned and executed;—for in their case Cromwell was inexorable, and insisted that the law should have its course on the ringleaders in a plot, which, if it had succeeded, or even had been more tardily checked, must have involved much suffering and bloodshed. It was Cromwell's last doings with such insurrectionists; them too he declared *dissolved*, and kept them so while he remained Protector,—a brief enough period now.

Yet all was not dark and perverse for Cromwell even then. In that same summer, in the leafy month of June, the news reached London of the taking of Dunkirk; the Spaniard, England's old enemy, foiled and beaten; and a valued trophy added to England's possessions. It was a seasonable victory to strengthen the hands of the Lord Protector while so many adverse circumstances had accumulated against him. It gave a fresh impetus to his influence on the fickle populace, who, with illuminations and shoutings, claimed to share with him in this triumph

over their ancient foe. The court of the Lord Protector was thronged with noble representatives of foreign courts, who came to congratulate the invincible sovereign of the English Commonwealth on his new victory. London was recalled from the memory of plots and cabals by the more attractive displays of gorgeous pageantry and state ceremonial; and while the populace forgot for a time their fancied wrongs in the passing show, thinking men rejoiced in the supremacy of a stable executive. England, in fact, felt once more that the ablest man of his age was her Protector and *King*.

CHAPTER XX.

DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS.

THE position of England in this year, 1658, the closing year of the Protectorate, was one which demanded in an especial manner the oversight of her great chief. He had need of all his wisdom, and all the brave endurance that had borne him through his victorious career of policy and war; for now there were "fightings without and fears within." Not royalist assassins alone strove to win royalty's knighthood and military honours by the strange pathway of hireling-murder; even the religious enthusiasts of the period had recourse to the dagger and stilletto: fifth-monarchy men, and other enthusiasts, persuading themselves that nothing but the removal of Cromwell was needed to take the hindrance away that stayed the advent of "King Jesus," and the political millennium they believed to be at hand. But Cromwell was equal to either fortune. If parliament would work with him, well; if not, he could work without them. If royalists would sit down content with firm but definite

and just rule, he was prepared for administering justice to all; if not, he had justice for them also whom nought but another revolution would suffice. He had taken his stand for life, fully persuaded in his own mind of the integrity of his cause, and he never swerved from the emphatic declaration made to his second parliament:—"The wilful throwing away of this government, such as it is, so owned by God, so approved by men, so witnessed to 'by the leaders and vast majority of the people of this nation,' were a thing which—in reference, not to my good, but to the good of these nations, and of posterity,—I can sooner be willing to be rolled in my grave, and buried with infamy, than I can give my consent unto!"

Yet Cromwell's large heart and comprehensive genius could spare a thought for others, amid all his difficulties. While occupied at home with a parliament of disaffected republicans, secret conspirators, and perjured politicians of all sorts, and with insurrection, threatening or breaking out on every hand, he had still time to remember his suffering Protestant brethren in the valleys of Piedmont, whom he had already rescued from persecution and death. Their cowardly persecutors probably flattered themselves that they might renew their former deeds of cruelty and oppression with impunity, now that the Lord Protector of England's Commonwealth was beset by such threatening difficulties and dangers at home. But they knew not the indomitable spirit of the man. Once more he stretched forth his hand for their protection, and bade the sword of their oppressor be sheathed. The following letter of Milton, written at his command to Louis XIV., is one of the last and noblest evidences of the consistent honesty and firmness of his foreign policy, by which he won for England so proud a standing among the nations, that even the degradation and venality of his successors sufficed only to stain it with their infamy, as with a passing shade.

"*To the most serene and potent Prince, Louis, King of France.*

"MOST SERENE AND POTENT KING, MOST AUGUST FRIEND AND ALLY.

"Your Majesty may recollect that during the negotiation between us for the renewing of our alliance, (which many advantages to both nations, and much damage to their common enemies, resulting therefrom, now testify to have been very auspiciously done,) there happened that miserable slaughter of the people of the Valleys; whose cause, on all sides deserted and trodden down, we recommended with the greatest earnestness and commiseration to your mercy and protection. Nor do we think your Majesty, for your own part, has been wanting in an office so pious and indeed so humane, in so far as either by authority or favour you might have influence with the Duke of Savoy: we certainly, and many other princes and states, by embassies, by letters, by entreaties directed thither, have not been wanting.

"After that most sanguinary massacre, which spared neither age nor sex, there was at last a peace given; or rather, under the specious name of peace, a certain more disguised hostility. The terms of the peace were settled in your town of Pignerol: hard terms indeed, but such as those indigent and wretched people, after suffering all manner of cruelties and atrocities, might gladly acquiesce in; if only, hard and unjust as they are, they were adhered to. They are not adhered to: the purport of every one of them is, by false interpretation and various subterfuges, eluded and violated. Many of these people are ejected from their old habitations; their religion is prohibited to many; new taxes are exacted; a new fortress has been built over them, out of which soldiers frequently sallying, plunder or kill whomsoever they meet. More-

over, new forces have of late been privily got ready against them; and such as follow the Romish religion are directed to withdraw from among them within a limited time; so that everything seems now again to point towards the extermination of all those unhappy people whom the former massacre had left.

"Which now, O most Christian King, I beseech and obtest thee, by thy right hand, which pledged a league and friendship with us, by the sacred honour of that title of Most Christian,—permit not to be done; nor let such license of butchery be given, I do not say to any prince, (for indeed no cruelty like this could come into the mind of any prince, much less into the tender years of that young Prince, or into the woman's heart of his mother,) but to those most cursed assassins; who, while they profess themselves the servants and imitators of Christ our Saviour, who came into the world to save sinners, abuse his merciful name and commandments to the cruelest slaughterings of the innocent. Snatch, thou who art able, and who in such an elevation art worthy to be able, those poor suppliants of thine, from the hands of murderers, who, lately drunk with blood, are again athirst for it, and think convenient to turn the discredit of their own cruelty upon the score of their Prince's. Suffer not either thy titles or the frontiers of thy kingdom to be polluted with that discredit, or the all-peaceful Gospel of Christ to be soiled by that cruelty, in thy reign. Remember that these very people became subjects of thy ancestor, Henry, that great friend to Protestants; when Lesdiguières victoriously pursued the Savoyard across the Alps, through those same valleys, where indeed lies the most commodious pass to Italy. The instrument of their surrender is yet extant in the public acts of your kingdom: in which this among other things is specified and provided against, That these people of the Valleys should not thereafter be delivered over to any one except

on the same conditions under which thy invincible ancestor had received them into fealty. This protection they now implore: the protection promised by thy ancestor they now suppliantly demand from thee, the grandson. To be thine rather than his whose they now are, if by any means of exchange it could be done, they would wish and prefer: if that may not be, thine at least by succour, by commiseration and deliverance.

"There are likewise reasons of state which might induce thee not to reject these people of the Valleys flying to thee for refuge: but I would not have thee, so great a King as thou art, be moved to the defence of the unfortunate by other reasons than the promise of thy ancestors, and thy own piety and royal benignity and greatness of mind. So shall the praise and fame of this most worthy action be unmixed and clear; and thyself shalt find the Father of mercy, and his Son Christ the King, whose name and doctrine thou shalt have vindicated from this hellish cruelty, the more favourable and propitious to thee through the whole course of thy life.

"May the Almighty, for his own glory, for the safety of so many most innocent Christian men, and for your true honour, dispose your Majesty to this determination.

"Your Majesty's most friendly

"OLIVER, PROTECTOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF ENGLAND.

"Westminster, 26th May, 1658."*

It was worthy of England's great poet to be thus found linked with her greatest statesman in thus standing between the oppressor and the oppressed. Nor did the exertions of Cromwell stop here. He wrote to Sir William Lockhart, his ambassador at the French court, calling on him to employ all his influence in securing the safety and

* Milton's Prose Works, London, 1832, p. 816.

best interests of the poor Protestants of Piedmont, and suggesting remedial measures, of great value for securing their permanent safety and well-being. Nothing more strongly evidences the commanding influence of Cromwell's genius, than the instant effect of his interference. The very sovereign of France, who a few years later, when England and Piedmont were alike without a protector, instigated fresh persecutions against these defenceless natives of the valleys; became at this time their intercessor and stayed for a while the outbreak of the storm.

But while the genius of Cromwell was thus powerful to grapple with the countless dangers and difficulties of his position; it was only burning thus brightly, by consuming the oil that might have sustained his vigorous frame to a good old age amid the peaceful pastoral duties he inherited from his father. His health was gradually breaking down; his

> "Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies,"

though they would not bend, could break. Already in his opening address to the last parliament, he had prayed them to excuse his brevity, in consequence of the state of his health; and now many symptoms tended to show that he was sinking under the weight of such unparalleled cares and trials. At this very period, new sorrows burst upon the strong man, to put his utmost strength to the trial. No evidence so strongly bears out the genuine character of the domestic virtues that reigned in the home-circle of Cromwell, than the close ties of love which bound them together, and remained unchanged amid all the elevation and grandeur of their later years. In Cromwell, these affections were peculiarly powerful, and retained their healthy vigour, as a pure and lambent flame, burning ever within his breast—an evidence of the indwelling integrity which had endured through every change. At this eventful period, when difficulties and

dangers seemed closing around him, and putting his brave heart to the proof, "sorrows took hold of him," assailing the more sacred circle of these domestic affections. A few months before, his young daughter, Frances Cromwell, had been married in her seventeenth year to Mr. Rich, the grandson of the Earl of Warwick; a genuine love match, wherein hearts were plighted as well as hands. On the twelfth day after the dissolution of the last parliament Rich died very suddenly, leaving his poor young wife, Lady Frances, a widow, and casting a deep gloom over the mourning circle at Hampton Court. Oliver expressed the lively sympathy which a common loss excited, in letters to his old friend the venerable Earl of Warwick. The Protector's letters are no longer known to exist, but the brave old Earl's reply is deserving of notice, for the honourable testimony he bears to Cromwell :—" My pen," says he, "and my heart were ever your Lordship's servants; now they are become your debtors. This paper cannot enough confess my obligations, and much less discharge it, for your reasonable and sympathizing letters, which (besides the value they derive from so worthy a hand) express such faithful affections, and administer such Christian advice, as renders them beyond measure welcome and dear to me. And, although my heaviness and distraction of thoughts, persuade me rather to peruse those excellent lines than to answer them, and to take relief from them rather than make a return to them, yet I must not be so indulgent to mine own sorrows as to lose this opportunity of being thankful to your lordship for so great a favour. My lord, all this is but a broken echo of your pious council, which gives such ease to my oppressed mind, that I can scarce forbid my pen being tedious. Only it remembers your lordship's many weighty and noble employments, which, together with your prudent, heroic, and honourable managery of them, I do here congratulate, as well as my grief will give me leave. Others' goodness is

their own; yours is a whole country's, yea, three kingdoms; for which you justly possess interest and renown with wise and good men; virtue is a thousand escutchions. Go on, my lord; go on happily, to love religion, to exemplify it. May your lordship long continue an instrument of use, a pattern of virtue, and a precedent of glory! This is the inward and affectionate prayer of, my lord, your lordship's most affectionate servant,—WARWICK."

It was probably the last blessing and the parting eulogy of a tried and faithful friend. Warwick's own death soon after added another to the many sorrows that accumulated on his close. His favourite daughter, Elizabeth, Lady Claypole, was seized with dangerous illness: her health had long been delicate, and the anxieties, and terrors which had so crowded on them all within the brief period of a few months, had proved too great a shock for her delicate frame. She now lay dangerously ill at Hampton Court, and all other cares were forgotten in this overmastering grief. Wretched lies have been written and propagated by Cromwell's traducers, of the abject terror into which he was driven on the dissolution of his last parliament,—affraid to sleep twice in the same bed; trembling to face his own guard; not daring to trust his most faithful officers; and scarcely venturing even to satisfy his hunger with the suspected viands on his table. With Charles's proclamations and promised knighthoods and honours to assassins, and with a pamphlet entitled "Killing no Murder," circulated by thousands throughout England, exhorting every man "to aspire to the honour of delivering his country,"—with such things as these before him, the bravest man had somewhat to apprehend. But Cromwell moved amid them unchanged. He feared not the hydra, far less did he quail before it. But when he saw his favourite child threatened by the grim tyrant he had so often faced in the field; when death knocked

at the palace gate, not for the weary and toil-worn soldier, but for his beloved daughter, then all else was forgotten in the terrible trial. It was an attack made on his strongest citadel, wherein all his jewels lay treasured, and by a stronger foe than those his victorious sword had so oft beat down. When the storm raged most fiercely abroad, his home was the sanctuary to which he always had turned, sure of finding there loving looks and faithful hearts, to share in his sorrows, or give new zest, by their sympathy, to his joys. But now this stronghold too was threatened. For fourteen days he watched by her bedside, he and her noble mother, and the loving circle of sisters, including their young Frances, with her widow's tears still undried. For fourteen days the fond father, unable to attend to any public business, refused to quit her bedside. On the 6th day of August, she lay at rest in her last sleep, and the weeping circle sought consolation where they had oft before found it in less trying hours of bereavement. Is there not sunshine in this dark sorrow? Sunshine to us at least, lighting up the character of that mourning father, and showing a great soul wherein the genial affections and charities of life burn bright as ever? The Lord Protector of England descends from his throne, flings aside his trappings of state, and all the cares that environ it, to watch by the bedside of his dying child, and alleviate her sufferings by all the tenderness and sympathy of a father's love. It is more touching, and a far nobler scene, in its unpremeditated heartfulness, even than the parting of Charles with his children;—it seems to me one of the very noblest incidents of that seventeenth century; when all its bearings and its relations are kept in view. Oliver bore it with the fortitude of a Christian parent, and yet it broke his heart. About a fortnight afterwards Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell, and after describing the funeral of his sister Elizabeth, he adds:—"Your lordship is a very sensible judge how great

an affliction this was to both their Highnesses, and how sad a family she left behind her; which sadness was truly very much increased by the sickness of his Highness, who at the same time lay very ill of the gout, and other distempers, contracted by the long sickness of my lady Elizabeth, which made great impression upon him; and since that, whether it were the retiring of the gout out of his foot into his body, or from some other cause, I am not able to say, he hath been very dangerously sick, the violence whereof lasted four or five days; but, blessed be God, he is now reasonably well recovered, and this day he went abroad for an hour, and finds himself much refreshed by it, so that this recovery of his Highness doth much allay the sorrow for my lady Elizabeth's death. Your excellency will easily imagine what an alarm his Highness' sickness gave us, being in the posture we are now in."

It was indeed alarming enough. The few wise men who knew the value of this Protector to England, saw, in no uncertain future, what awaited her if deprived of him at such a time. England, while bound together into one, by such an encompassing power, was as the faggot-heap which could not be broken; but that tie once severed, royalists, republicans, or whoever after chose to try it, might bend and break its dissevered fragments at their pleasure. Even in these fourteen days of loving solicitude and sorrow, many things threatened to go wrong; and some few learned better the worth of the leader who for more than fourteen years had been her guide through so many dangers, and promised yet to be their guide—should providence permit—to a haven of rest.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH OF THE PROTECTOR.

OLIVER CROMWELL, in the year 1658, was in his sixtieth year, with all his old energy and fire within him, and still with an iron frame, that seemed to bid defiance to the shocks it had to bear. What might not his country still anticipate from him? "Ten years more of life," says Carlyle,* "would have given another history to all the centuries of England. But it was not to be so, it was to be otherwise. Oliver's health, as we might observe, was but uncertain in late times; often indisposed the spring before last. His course of life had not been favourable to health! 'A burden too heavy for man!' as he himself with a sigh, would sometimes say. Incessant toil: inconceivable labour, of head, and heart, and hand; toil, peril, and sorrow manifold, continued for near twenty years now, had done their part: these robust life-energies, it afterwards appeared, had been gradually eaten out. Like a tower strong to the eye, but with its foundations undermined; which has not long to stand, the fall of which, on any shock, may be sudden."

Shocks enough it surely had in these last days of his. Intractable politicians, men greedy of change, to whom any vague poetic theory, or any old constitutional fiction of law, seemed preferable to the practical blessings of a firm and stable government,—these all lent their puny help, now in divided groups, and anon with passing unanimity, to batter down the strong tower that stood between them and the floods. In one of our English painter Hogarth's well-known pictures, an over-zealous demagogue and

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii p. 658.

hater of kings appears, mounted astride on the sign of *the crown*, which has long creaked and swung from its projecting beam, in front of an hospitable inn. With saw in hand, he is busily engaged cutting through the beam, close to the wall, altogether heedless of his inevitable share in its downfall. It is an apt illustration of anarchy at all times; and very specially applies to the republican opponents of the Protectorate. The royalists, as it chanced, had their own of it for a time, with a restoration-government; though whether altogether to the satisfaction of the honest men among them, admits of very grave question. But these honest impracticable republicans, whom no reason nor practical demonstration could convince, they surely owed their very existence to him who stood between England and her hereditary Stuarts, and who was no sooner laid in his last resting place, than they brought themselves to the gallows and the block.

The shocks of such assailants, however, were trifling, when compared with the death of his loved child. How green and fresh had all these affections remained! No sere upon their leaf; though the rough bark be gnarled and scarred by many a winter's storm! Therein lay the strength of England's Samson, enshrined where no profane Philistine could reach. In freshness of feeling, his heart was ever young; and this it was that with genial influence, sunned him on his way, and nerved the brave-hearted one to dare his mighty task. These lines of Barton are very simple, yet their admission here may be pardoned for their truthfulness, as no inappropriate adaptation of sentiment at such a time:

"O smile not! nor think it a worthless thing,
If it be with instruction fraught;
That which will closest and longest cling
Is alone worth a serious thought!
Should aught be unlovely which thus can shed
Grace on the dying, and leaves on the dead.

"Now, in thy youth beseech of Him
Who giveth, upbraiding not,

That his light in thy heart become not dim,
And his love be unforgot!
And thy God in the darkest of days will be
Greenness, and beauty, and strength to thee."

It was even so. The freshness of genial affections budded and bloomed to the last, and His light who "giveth, upbraiding not," waxed not dim, when the conqueror, who had so often met death in the field of carnage, —"the battle of the warrior, with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood,"—was to descend alone into the dark valley.

An interesting and most valuable record of the incidents which marked the Protector's closing hours has happily been preserved to us by the pious hand of one, whose intimacy with the great leader of the Commonwealth only made him love and venerate his memory the more. It is entitled "A Collection of Several Passages concerning his late Highness Oliver Cromwell, in the time of his Sickness. Wherein is related many of his expressions upon his deathbed, together with his prayers within two or three days before his death. Written by one that was then groom of his bedchamber." The faithful attendant of the Protector was no doubt known to many of his contemporaries as the author of this pious memorial, though he modestly concealed his name.* It is well worthy of note by those who begin to doubt the infallibility of royalist slanderers, with their vague exaggeration of every lie that rumour or sycophancy set afloat, to prejudice the memory of "the Huntingdon Brewer," and tickle the ears of "the

* Carlyle corrects "Noble's bad authority," who had called him Maidston, adding, "we must warn the reader that Maidston was 'steward of the household,' not 'groom of the bedchamber,' and that the authorship of this pamphlet remains uncertain for the present." (Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 659.) Forster, however, had long before corrected Noble, and stated, (vol. ii. p. 389,) "The author was Underwood, groom of the bedchamber, and was present at the scene;" a scene which we have also quoted, as one of the most valuable glimpses now recoverable, of the last days of Cromwell.

Merry Monarch!" The value attached to such cheap slander at the restoration-court must not be forgot by the reader, who wishes to estimate at their true value either the facts and narrations of Heath and other courtly *flagellators* of the Protectorate, of every rank and degree; or the affectionate tribute of the faithful Underwood, and the enthusiastic admiration of Milton, with whom language seems insufficient for his disinterested praise. Let one passage from the Sermons of Dr. South suffice as an example—the same Dr. South, who in 1655, signalized his accession to the rank of an Oxford Master of Arts, by a Latin panegyric on the Protector, congratulating him on the triumphant close of the Dutch war! In 1681, Dr. South had found it convenient to forget his youthful admiration of the Protectorate, and indeed to take his view from a very different point of sight. His pliant and courtly disposition had been appreciated sufficiently to win him the appointment of one of the chaplains to the King, and the well-bred divine understood the duties of his office too well to intrude on his Majesty's ear any unpalatable doctrine, or unpleasant reminiscence. Preaching in the latter year before his royal patron, he selected as his text these words: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the disposing of it is of the Lord," in illustration of which the sermon contains the following singular piece of pulpit eloquence: "Who that had beheld such a bankrupt, beggarly fellow as Cromwell, first entering the Parliament House, with a threadbare torn cloak, and greasy hat, (perhaps neither of them paid for,) could have suspected that in the space of so few years, he should by the murder of one king, and the banishment of another, ascend the throne, be invested in the royal robes, and want nothing of the state of a king, but the changing of his hat into a crown!" "'Ods fish, Lory!" exclaimed the delighted monarch to Lord Rochester, after his violent fit of laughter had somewhat subsided, "'Ods fish, your chaplain

must be a bishop; therefore put me in mind of him at the next vacancy." With even learned divines under such influence, the reader may know better how to appreciate both the censure and the praise of Cromwell, when the death of the great Protector rendered the latter not only disinterested, but dangerous, as evidence of disaffection and disloyalty. The faithful "groom of the bedchamber" thus records in one of his collected passages, the scene we have already alluded to, and which we quote in the abridged form, and with the additions of Carlyle:*

"'His Highness being at Hampton Court, sickened a little before the Lady Elizabeth died. Her decease was on Friday, 6th August, 1658, she having lain long under great extremity of bodily pain, which, with frequent and violent convulsion-fits, brought her to her end. But as to his Highness, it was observed that his sense of her outward misery in the pains she endured, took deep impression upon him; who indeed was ever a most indulgent and tender father; his affections, too, being regulated and bounded by such Christian wisdom and prudence, as did eminently shine in filling up not only that relation of a father, but also all other relations; wherein he was a most rare and singular example. And no doubt but the sympathy of his spirit with his sorely afflicted and dying daughter did break him down at this time, considering also, innumerable other considerations of sufferings and toils, which made me often wonder he was able to hold up so long; except indeed, that he was borne up by a supernatural power at a more than ordinary rate. As a mercy to the truly Christian world, and to us of these nations, had we been worthy of him!'

"The same authority, who unhappily is not chronological, adds elsewhere this little picture, which we must take with us. 'At Hampton Court, a few days after the death of the Lady Elizabeth, which touched him nearly,—

* Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, vol. ii. p. 646.

being then himself under bodily distempers, forerunners of that sickness which was to death, and in his bedchamber, he called for his Bible, and desired an honourable and godly person there, with others present, to read unto him that passage in Phil. iv. 11: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere, and by all things, I am instructed; both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Which read, said he, to use his own words as near as I can remember them: "This Scripture did once save my life, when my eldest son," poor Oliver, "died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did." And then repeating the words of the text himself, and reading the tenth and eleventh verses of Paul's contentation and submission to the will of God in all conditions, said he, "It's true, Paul, you have learned this, and attained to this measure of grace, but what shall I do? Ah poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!" But reading on to the thirteenth verse, where Paul saith, "*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*,"—then faith began to work; and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself, "He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ too." And so drew water out of the wells of salvation.'"

Now is the time to judge of the oft-reiterated charge of Cromwell's hypocrisy; and that it should have found any honest writer to maintain it in this nineteenth century, with all the facts of history before him, proves how very difficult it is to extinguish historic falsehood, however hollow, baseless, and self-contradictory. Reader, study, if you would understand him, Cromwell's correspondence with his own family, and his most intimate friends; with his fellow-soldiers, his ambassadors, official agents, and

the representatives and heads of foreign courts; his addresses to his Ironsides on the eve of a battle;* his speeches to his parliaments in anticipation of their friendly co-operation, or in censure and defiance of their faithless opposition and obstinate perversity; and last of all, read these "Passages concerning his Highness in the time of his Sickness," and the solemn deathbed prayer of the great general and statesman, the words in which he addressed himself to God, when the things of time were all passing away as a vain shadow, and the realities of eternity were awfully present before him;—read all these, and say if the theory of Cromwell's hypocrisy be any longer sustainable, or even conceivable? It is no begging of the question to state it thus. Whatever opinion we may form of Cromwell's policy—and there is abundant room for diversity of opinion on that—we find that from the period of his unheeded labours as the farmer of Huntingdon, to his last hours, amid all the magnificence of Whitehall, a perfect consistency is apparent throughout his written and spoken language, including those passing effusions of friendship and parental affection, which were destined for no other than partial eyes. Cromwell may have been an enthusiast, even a fanatic, but while we possess such voluminous evidence of his own faith in his policy, and his firm reliance on the religion he had professed through life, we must dismiss the charge of hypocrisy as one of the most baseless lies that history ever adopted from party prejudice and slander.

On Friday, the 20th August, 1658, Oliver Cromwell rode out through the grounds around his favourite palace at Hampton Court, now darkened to him in that bright autumn, as the house of sorrow. It was his last ride among these favourite scenes. He had seemed much better; but on the following day his illness returned with increased violence well calculated to excite anxiety and fear in those around him. The feverish symptoms con-

tinued to increase for four successive days; at the end of which the doctors advised his removal to Whitehall, with the hope that new scenes and change of air might exercise a favourable influence on the disease, "a double tertian fever," as Thurloe afterwards described it, in writing to Henry Cromwell. On Tuesday, the 24th August, he quitted Hampton Court for the last time. It was at Whitehall palace that Cromwell was to wrestle with "the last enemy," a place where, if conscience looked back with any doubt or remorse on the scene with which the Banqueting Hall of that old palace is so enduringly associated, he must have trembled at the memories that lingered in its halls. But Cromwell, if he reverted to that act, did so with conscious integrity, and saw no cause for repentance, far less of remorse. He looked not back but forward—forward to rest. In old and long-forgotten days had not there stood around the font of St. John's Church at Huntingdon, a group of loving and earnest worshippers! Old Robert Cromwell was there, and his sumptuous elder brother, the heir of Hinchinbrook, with other uncles and friends. The surpliced priest held in his arms an infant of a few days old, and while they knelt around, and in the name of that unconscious babe, took on them the awfully solemn vows of baptism, the ministering priest dipt his finger in the pure water, and placing it on his infant brow, first called him by the name of Oliver, his Christian name, and pronounced these memorable words:—"We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant, unto his life's end." What a crowded era of change had intervened between that solemn dedication of the infant son of Robert Cromwell of Huntingdon, in the old parish church,

and this deathbed scene in Whitehall palace? Yet is there no unmistakable connection between the far-parted links of life's chain. Amid many errors and backslidings, many failings and sins, he had still been Christ's faithful soldier, and now, as the editor of his Letters and Speeches quaintly but pithily expresses it, "I fancy he has been looking this long while, to give it up, whenever the commander-in-chief required. To quit his laborious sentry post; honourably lay up his arms, and be gone to his rest—all eternity to rest in!"

"His time was come" says his faithful groom of the bedchamber, "and neither prayers nor tears could prevail with God to lengthen out his life and continue him longer to us. Prayers abundantly and incessantly poured out on his behalf, both publicly and privately, as was observed, in a more than ordinary way; besides many a secret sigh,—secret and unheard by men, yet like the cry of Moses, more loud, and strongly laying hold on God, than many spoken supplications. All which—the hearts of God's people being thus mightily stirred up,—did seem to beget confidence in some, and hopes in all; yea, some thoughts in himself that God would restore him."

"Prayers public and private," adds Carlyle in his own pungent style of comment, "they are worth imagining to ourselves. Meetings of preachers, chaplains, and godly persons; Owen, Goodwin, Sterry, with a company of others in an adjoining room in Whitehall, and elsewhere over religious London and England, fervent outpourings of many a loyal heart. For there were hearts to whom the nobleness of this man was known; and his worth to the Puritan cause was evident. Prayers—strange enough to us; in a dialect fallen obsolete, forgotten now. Authentic wrestlings of ancient human souls—who were alive then, with their affections, awe-struck pieties; with their human wishes, risen to be *transcendant*, hoping to prevail with the Inexorable. All swallowed now in the

depths of dark time, which is full of such since the beginning!—Truly it is a great scene of world-history this, in old Whitehall: Oliver Cromwell drawing nigh to his end. The exit of Oliver Cromwell and of English Puritanism; a great light, one of our few authentic solar luminaries, going down now amid the clouds of death. Like the setting of a great victorious summer sun, its course now finished. '*So stirbt ein Held*,' says Schiller, 'So dies a hero! Sight worthy to be worshipped!' He died, this hero Oliver, in resignation to God, as the good have all done. 'We could not be more desirous he should abide,' says the pious Maidston,* than he was content and willing to be gone.'

"Oliver, we find, spoke much of 'the Covenants;' which indeed, are the grand axis of all, in that Puritan universe of his. Two covenants; one of works, with fearful judgment for our shortcomings therein, one of grace, with unspeakable mercy;—gracious engagements, covenants which the eternal God has vouchsafed to make with his feeble creature man. Two; and by Christ's death they have become one—there for Oliver is the divine solution of this our mystery of life. 'They were two,' he was heard ejaculating: 'Two, but put into one before the foundation of the world!' And again: 'It is holy and true, it is holy and true, it is holy and true!—Who made it holy and true? The mediator of the covenant.' And again: 'The covenant is but one. Faith in the covenant is my only support, and, if I believe not, He abides faithful.' When his children and wife stood weeping round him, he said, 'Love not this world. I say unto you it is not good that you should love this world!' No. 'Children, live like Christians; I leave you the covenant to feed upon!' Yes, my brave one, even so. The covenant, and eternal soul of covenants, remains sure to all the faithful; deeper than the foundations of this world, earlier than they, and more lasting than they!

* Underwood, see p. 281.

"Look also at the following; dark hues and bright; immortal light beams struggling amid the black vapours of death. Look, and conceive a great sacred scene, the sacredest this world sees—and think of it, do not speak of it in these mean days which have no sacred word. 'Is there none that says, Who will deliver me from the peril?' moaned he once. Many hearts are praying, O wearied one! 'Man can do nothing,' rejoins he, 'God can do what he will.' Another time, again thinking of the covenant, 'Is there none that will come and praise God,' whose mercies endure for ever!

"Here also are ejaculations caught up at intervals, undated, in those final days: 'Lord, thou knowest, if I do desire to live, it is to show forth thy praise and declare thy works!' Once he was heard saying, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!' 'This was spoken three times,' says Maidston, 'his repetitions usually being very weighty, and with great vehemency of spirit.' Thrice over he said this, looking into the eternal kingdoms. But again: 'All the promises of God are in *Him*, yea, and in Him amen; to the glory of God by *us*,—by us in Jesus Christ.'—'The Lord hath filled me with as much assurance of his pardon and his love, as my soul can hold.'—'I think I am the poorest wretch that lives; but I love God; or rather am beloved of God.'—'I am a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, through Christ that strengtheneth me!'"

Few parting scenes are more impressive than this one of the deathbed of England's Protector. His noble wife and fondly attached children, stand weeping around. Great men too are there, of whom England grows ever more proud, as centuries fulfil their revolutions; and divines, whose earnest prayers mingle with those of the dying hero, and share in the bright anticipations of his steadfast faith,—not less thought of now, by most men, than they were by their most partial admirers then. Yet

hope was not easily extinguished in those who had so long leaned on the staff of their great leader, and found confidence and safety under the shadow of his power. They hope even against hope to the last, for what could the boldest of them repose their hope in, if not in him. On the 25th of August,—the day after his removal to Whitehall,—Thurloe wrote to Henry Cromwell, who still occupied the vice-regal Protectorate of Ireland:—"May it please your excellency, I gave you some account by Dr. Worth of his Highness' condition, as it then was; but lest he should delay his journey, or miscarry in it, I thought it necessary to send this express, to the end your excellency may fully understand how it is with his Highness. This is the thirteenth day since his ague took him, having been sick a fortnight before of a general distemper of body. It continued a good while to be a tertian ague, and the burning fits very violent. Upon Saturday it fell to a double tertian, having two fits in twenty-four hours, one upon the heels of another, which do extremely weaken him, and endanger his life. And truly since Saturday morning he hath scarce been perfectly out of his fits. The doctors are yet hopeful that he may struggle through it, though their hopes are mingled with much fear. But we have cause to put our hope in the Lord, and to expect mercy from him in this case, he having stirred up the saints to pray for him in all places. Never was there a greater stock of prayers going for any man than is now going for him; and truly there is a general consternation upon the spirits of all men, good and bad, fearing what may be the event of it, should it please God to take his Highness at this time: and God having prepared the heart to pray, I trust he will incline his ear to hear. And that which is some ground of hope is, that the Lord, as in some former occasions, hath given to himself a particular assurance that he shall yet live to serve him and to carry on the work he hath put into his

hands. . . . I do not find, that there are any great stirrings yet upon this occasion, though the cavaliers do begin to listen after it, and hope their day is coming, or indeed come, if his Highness die. And truly, my lord, we have cause to fear, that it may go very ill with us, if the Lord should take away his Highness in this conjuncture. Not that I think Charles Stuart's interest is so great, or his party so powerful in themselves: but I fear our own divisions, which may be great enough, if his Highness should not settle and fix his successor before he dies, which truly I believe he hath not yet done. He did by himself declare one in a paper before he was installed by the parliament, and sealed it up in the form of a letter, directing it to me, but kept both the name of the person and the paper to himself. After he fell sick at Hampton Court, he sent Mr. John Barrington to London for it, telling him it lay upon his study table at Whitehall; but it was not to be found there, nor elsewhere, though it hath been very narrowly looked for. And in this condition matters stand, his Highness having been too ill to be troubled with a business of this importance. This day he hath had some discourse about it, but his illness disenabled him to conclude it fully; and if it should please the Lord not to give him time to settle his succession before his death, the judgment would be the sorer, and our condition the more dangerous; but I trust he will have compassion on us, and not leave us a prey to our enemies, or to one another. All persons here are very reserved as to what they will do, in case his Highness should not declare his successor before he dies, not being willing to entertain any discourse of it, either because it is a matter too grievous to be thought of, or because they would not discover any opinion, which might cross his Highness' thoughts in his lifetime. And this, my lord, is the whole account I am able to give your lordship of this sad business, which I am sure will occasion much trouble and sorrow to you;

but I could not omit my duty, judging it absolutely necessary, that your excellency should understand all that passes or falls out upon this subject, that you may the better know how to direct your prayers and counsels, and stir up others also to pray for his Highness and three nations in this day of distress. And as any thing further occurs (which I beseech the Lord may be for good) I shall suddenly dispatch it away to you, and be ready to answer such commands as your excellency shall lay upon me, being your excellency's most humble, faithful, and obedient servant, JO. THURLOE.—Whitehall, 30th August, 1658, 9 o'clock at night. . . The King of Sweden and the King of Denmark are again in open hostility; the King of Sweden landed an army upon his island of Zealand, and is like to possess himself of his capital city, Copenhagen, and the Sound. The cause of this new quarrel I cannot now acquaint your excellency, being not informed myself. . . That about the succession is an absolute secret: I beseech your excellency keep it so."

The question of the successorship was indeed enough *to compel men to hope.* The paper wherein the successor to the Protectorship of England was named, though searched for, was never found. On the night before Cromwell's death, he is understood to have named his eldest son Richard, who did succeed him,—but the matter is extremely doubtful. His imbecility was well known to his father,—his utter incapacity for wielding the sceptre of England at such a crisis. The very existence of such a document,—and, we may add, its disappearance,—point to some other than ordinary hereditary succession. Henry Cromwell, the able and tried ruler of Ireland, was the true successor to the Protectorate,—the legitimate heir to his father's unenviable throne. Saving the questionable honour of a seat in his abortive House of Peers, Cromwell put no honours on Richard, and intrusted no duties to him, calculated, either to educate him for future

government or test his fitness for power. Yet abundant evidence exists to show that he loved him no less than the other members of his family, and this very love may most readily account for his concealing to the last, the intention he entertained of setting him aside from a throne he was so incapable of filling. Thurloe's letter leaves no doubt who its author regarded as the fit successor of Oliver Cromwell; and had Henry, instead of Richard Cromwell, succeeded to his father ——— but it is no time or place to speculate on what might have been. England was tardily to learn the worth of her Protector, by knowing what legitimate and hereditary Protectors, not of Nature's Peerage, were worth.

On Monday, the 30th of August, as Cromwell lay a-dying, a dreadful storm of wind raged over London, and all the adjacent country, but it did not disturb the equanimity of the dying chief. His part in this world's storms was, happily for him, drawing to a close; his last fight was well-nigh fought, his last victory almost won. Amid the fury of the tempest that swept along the Thames, and shook, like an impatient messenger from the spirits' land, at the windows of the chamber of death, Oliver was thus heard by his attendants in prayer:—"Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in covenant with thee through grace. And I may, I will, come to thee, for thy people. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation; and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on thy instruments, to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor

worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer:—Even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen."

"Some variation there is," says the recorder of these Passages, "of this prayer, as to the account divers give of it," as might indeed be expected in the report of such a scene. Men do not stand composedly at a dying master's bed "reporting" every word in their note-book; nevertheless "so much is certain, that these were his requests. Wherein his heart was so carried out for God and his people,—yea indeed for some who had added no little sorrow to him,—that at this time he seems to forget his own family and nearest relations."

Thus passed away these fleeting hours of storm and calm. On Thursday night, "that very night before the Lord took him to his everlasting rest," the faithful recorder of the touching incidents of these last scenes, was in attendance on Cromwell, and overheard his dying master from time to time giving voice to his thoughts in such ejaculations as these:—"'Truly God is good; indeed he is; he will not'——Then his speech failed him, but as I apprehended, it was, 'He will not leave me.' This saying, 'God is good,' he frequently used all along; and would speak it with much cheerfulness, and fervour of spirit, in the midst of his pains.—Again he said: 'I would be willing to live to be farther serviceable to God and his people: but my work is done. Yet God will be with his people.'

"He was very restless most part of the night, speaking often to himself. And there being something to drink offered him, he was desired to take the same and endeavour to sleep.—Unto which he answered: 'It is not my design to drink or sleep; but my design is, to make what haste I can to be gone.'—

"Afterwards towards morning, he used divers holy ex-

pressions, implying much inward consolation and peace; among the rest he spake some exceeding self-debasing words, *annihilating* and judging himself. And truly it was observed, that a public spirit to God's cause did breathe in him,—as in his lifetime, so now to his very last."

It was the night of the 2d of September. The morrow is his FORTUNATE DAY, ever kept as a day of commemoration and thanksgiving since the victories of Dunbar and Worcester. When the sun rose on the morrow, it looked on a far nobler victory, well-nigh won, than on that grey Scottish morning, when the exulting leader beheld its slanting rays first glance across the misty heaths that skirted the Lammermoors. "The great storm of the night of the 2d of September, 1658, reached to the coasts of the Mediterranean. It was such a night in London as had rarely been passed by dwellers in crowded streets. Trees were torn from their roots in the park, chimnies blown down, and houses unroofed in the city. The various accounts which writers as various have handed down to us, would seem to realize the night of Duncan's murder.

'As they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death,
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night.'

"It was, indeed, a night which prophesied a woeful time to England, but to Cromwell it proved a night of happiness. It ushered in for him, far more surely than at Worcester or Dunbar, his FORTUNATE DAY."*

The storm raged without, but all was calm and peaceful within; the labourer was going to his rest; the toil-worn soldier to his home; and the dark messenger that

* Forster's Life of Cromwell, vol. ii. p. 392.

beckoned him away, was welcome to him as the breath of evening to one who has borne the burden and heat of the day. He was passing away from a world of illusions and dreams to one of great realities, where all things are abiding and eternal—where the great and the good are—where there is provided "an inheritance"—where there remains "a rest,"—there we believe the Christian soldier was passing on that day of victory. "Into the Silent Land," as the German, Salis, has it:—

"Into the Silent Land!
To you, ye boundless regions
Of all perfection! tender morning visions
Of beauteous souls! Eternity's own band!
Who in life's battle firm doth stand,
Shall bear hope's tender blossoms
Into the Silent Land!

O, Land! O, Land!
For all the broken-hearted
The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand,
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great departed,
Into the Silent Land!"

It was indeed a day of thanksgiving for Cromwell, but none for those he had left behind. "The consternation and astonishment of all people" writes Fauconberg, to his brother-in-law, Henry Cromwell, "are inexpressible; their hearts seem as if sunk within them. My poor wife, —I know not what on earth to do with her. When seemingly quieted, she bursts out again into a passion that tears her very heart in pieces." Poor Mary Cromwell; her loss was great indeed in such a father's great gain! A mournful circle it must have been that gathered around that deathbed and closed the eyes of so noble a husband and father. Poor young Frances was there, only seventeen, and scarce seven months a widow,—scarce one month since he had stood with them—every other thought

absorbed in the anguish of a father's feelings,—as they watched by the deathbed of Elizabeth, their loved sister, his most loved and favourite child. But yet there was consolation for these mourning ones, "consolation, and good hope through faith." It was England that had most cause to mourn.

Thurloe, whose account of Cromwell's illness we have already quoted, announced the close, in the following touching letter to Henry Cromwell: "May it please your excellency, I did by an express upon Monday give your excellency account of his Highness' sickness, and the danger he was in. Since that it hath pleased God to put an end to his days. He died yesterday, about four of the clock in the afternoon. I am not able to speak or write. This stroke is so sore, so unexpected, the providence of God in it so stupendous, considering the person that is fallen, the time and season, wherein God took him away, with other circumstances, I can do nothing but put my mouth in the dust, and say, 'It is the Lord!' And though his ways be not always known, yet they are always righteous, and we must submit to his will, and resign up ourselves to him with all our concernments. . . . His Highness was pleased before his death to declare my lord Richard successor. He did it upon Monday; and the Lord hath so ordered it, that the council and army have received him with all manner of affection. He is this day proclaimed; and hitherto there seems a great face of peace: the Lord continue it! . . . It is not to be said what affection the army and all people show to his late Highness; his name is already precious. Never was there any man so prayed for as he was during his sickness; solemn assemblies meeting every day, to beseech the Lord for the continuance of his life; so that he is gone to heaven, embalmed with the tears of his people, and upon the wings of the prayers of the saints. He lived desired and died

lamented, every body bemoaning themselves, and saying, 'A great man is fallen in Israel!' The Lord double his spirit upon his successor and upon your excellency, that you may both be famous in your generation, and be helped by God, with one heart and shoulder, to carry on that work, the foundation whereof your most renowned father laid, and for which posterity will bless him! The council hath given your excellency an account of what is done as to the proclaiming his Highness your brother. I only herewith send the vote of the council; and, though I know not what will be my portion or condition here, yet I shall always be your excellency's most humble and obedient servant, JO. THURLOE. . . . His Highness (Richard,) intends to send a gentleman to your excellency in the beginning of the next week, to let you understand fully the state of all things here and of your family; and commanded me to desire you to excuse his not writing by this messenger. The truth is, his Highness' death is so sore a stroke unto him, and he is so sensible of it, that he is in no condition to write or do yet. Here is a sad family on all hands: the Lord support them!"

The character of Cromwell is the property of his country, but it need not be further analyzed, here. It is not by essays on his genius, but by an impartial statement of facts, that it will be rightly understood. The time seems will-nigh come for its being studied in a very different spirit from that which has been hitherto aimed at by most men. In our own day the history of Cromwell's time is pregnant with lessons of no common value to England. The nations of Europe are seeking to do in the nineteenth century what the people of England did in the seventeenth,—to shake off oppressive despotism, and antiquated usages opposed to the just rights of man. To Spain, with her intolerant creed and tyrannical misgovernment of centuries; to Italy, with her petty princes quenching the old Roman fire; to Prussia and Austria, and some

at least of the petty states of Germany,—to each and all of these, if revolution bring inevitably in its train, privations, struggles, suffering, and war, it may still store up for other generations liberty such as England now enjoys. But this fact is unquestionably proved in the history of the first great English revolution, as in all others, *that revolutions are not for the present but the future.* Other men must enter into these labours and reap their reward. England had, in the seventeenth century, a just cause for rebellion; a great leader; wise, able, and faithful advisers; she had men of integrity and sound Christian principles among her councillors; and God-fearing men abounding even in her armies, and among her protesting crowds;—yet with all these advantages, how slowly have we reaped the fruits of a harvest, sown amid such sore travail and death-throes! And now that we have reaped some of these fruits, and with unrestricted freedom may agitate and clamour, as loudly as we please, for more, how poorly shall we have studied the lessons of history, if rash men can be found among the free subjects of England's crown to demand that we should level the work of centuries to its foundations, and heedlessly stand bare to the pelting of such a storm as that which our forefathers endured in purchasing our liberties; merely because of some flaw in its outworks, —or rather, perhaps, because an impatient neighbour, such as France, chooses for the third time to undo the work which it has twice before done so ill.

England enjoyed in her great revolution that blessing for which she will yet learn to be grateful and thankful, the more she studies the history of nations, viz., a leader equal to the crisis. Herein lay God's greatest gift to her in that seventeenth century, when liberty and despotism, light and darkness, hung trembling in the balance. In 1655, Doctor South put his pitiful Latin hexameters together to flatter "the most serene Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth," and had the next supreme ruler,

for whom he maligned him in such vulgar strains, found another "most serene" supplanter, the courtly divine would no doubt have found "sugared words" for him also. But Cromwell had other panegyrists. England's great poet addressed him in his "Defensio Secunda;"—and when he had passed away for ever from the scene of such promised achievements, when all these admonitions were tested, and these anticipations past, Milton, still, in poverty, in solitude, and darkness, revered the memory of England's Protector. Read in this light how proud is the congratulation of Milton to Cromwell. "In this state of desolation," says Milton,* "to which we were reduced, you, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the government, and to save the country. We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue, except the few among us, who are either ambitious of honours which they have not the capacity to sustain, or who envy those which are conferred on one more worthy than themselves, or else who do not know that nothing in the world is more pleasing to God, more agreeable to reason, more politically just, or more generally useful, than that the supreme power should be vested in the best and the wisest of men. Such, Cromwell, all acknowledge you to be; such are the services which you have rendered, as the leader of our councils, the general of our armies, and the father of your country. For this is the tender appellation by which all the good among us salute you from the very soul. Other names you neither have nor could endure; and you deservedly reject that pomp of title which attracts the gaze and admiration of the multitude. For what is a title but a certain definite mode of dignity; but actions such as yours surpass, not only the bounds of our admiration, but our titles; and like the points of pyramids, which are lost in the clouds, they soar above the possibilities of titular commendation.

* Milton's Prose Works, London, 1806, vol. vi. p. 435.

But since, though it be not fit, it may be expedient, that the highest pitch of virtue should be circumscribed within the bounds of some human appellation, you endured to receive, for the public good, a title most like to that of the father of your country; not to exalt, but rather to bring you nearer to the level of ordinary men; the title of king was unworthy the transcendant majesty of your character. For if you had been captivated by a name over which, as a private man, you had so completely triumphed and crumbled into dust, you would have been doing the same thing as if, after having subdued some idolatrous nation by the help of the true God, you should afterwards fall down and worship the gods which you had vanquished. Do you then, Sir, continue your course with the same unrivalled magnanimity; it sits well upon you. To you our country owes its liberties, nor can you sustain a character at once more momentous and more august, than that of the author, the guardian, and the preserver of our liberties; and hence you have not only eclipsed the achievements of all our kings, but even those which have been fabled of our heroes. Often reflect what a dear pledge the beloved land of your nativity has intrusted to your care; and that liberty which she once expected only from the chosen flower of her talents and her virtues, she now expects from you, and by you only hopes to obtain. Revere the fond expectations which we cherish, the solicitudes of your anxious country; revere the looks and the wounds of your brave companions in arms, who, under your banners, have so strenuously fought for liberty; revere the shades of those who perished in the contest: revere also the opinions and hopes which foreign states entertain concerning us, who promise to themselves so many advantages from that liberty, which we have so bravely acquired from the establishment of that new government, which has begun to shed its splendour on the world, which, if it be suffered to vanish like

a dream, would involve us in the deepest abyss of shame; and lastly revere yourself; and after having endured so many sufferings, and encountered so many perils for the sake of liberty, do not suffer it, now it is obtained, either to be violated by yourself, or in any one instance impaired by others. You cannot be truly free unless we are free too; for such is the nature of things, that he who trenches on the liberty of others, is the first to lose his own, and become a slave. But if you who have hitherto been the patron and tutelary genius of liberty, if you who are exceeded by no one in justice, in piety, and goodness, should hereafter invade that liberty which you have defended, your conduct must be fatally operative, not only against the cause of liberty, but the general interests of piety and virtue."

Milton survived the great leader of the Commonwealth of England, and shared in the contumely and the sufferings which the Restoration brought on the friends of liberty and virtue. In his high-souled integrity he chose poverty rather than a post of honour under the government of Charles Stuart, and feeling therefore the more keenly the dire effects that flowed to England from that desertion of her cause which paved the way for Charles II. to return to his father's forfeited throne, he was not likely to acquit Cromwell, had he believed him to be the betrayer of his country's liberties. To be the defender of Cromwell then was not only unpopular, it was unsafe; to be his maligner was the readiest path to honour and reward. Yet Milton never recalled the language of lofty admiration that had proceeded from his sacred lips. Let that suffice for Cromwell. It may well atone for a century and a half of ingratitude, malignity, and ignorant prejudice.

It is not unworthy of consideration, if our idea of Cromwell's policy and of his character be the true one, how it should happen that a man so far beyond his age in genius, toleration, and self-denying virtue, should yet have been

abandoned for so long a period to misrepresentation and slander. The inquiry is a reasonable one, nor is its solution difficult. If Cromwell was, as we believe him to have been, a man under the influence of religion, in whom the mild domestic virtues which he maintained in the strange atmosphere of a court, and the straightforward character of his very decided policy, sprung from the living principle of genuine Christianity in his own heart, then the style of his speech, and the character of many of his associates admit of easy solution. If after the perusal of some elegant modern author, we take up the works of a Puritan Divine of the seventeenth century, we are struck with much that is quaint, and, as we are apt to think, pedantic, out of place, and even, possibly, coarse and irreverent, in his mode of treating the most sacred theme. If, however, by a judiciously selected course of reading, we familiarize ourselves with the best writers of that period and of the age immediately preceding, we then discover an intelligible consistency in the whole, and a character which pertains, not to the individual, but to the age; so that it would be as reasonable to complain that he wore a steeple hat and short cloak, instead of our modern swallow-tail coat and Parisian beaver, as to stigmatize him as a hypocrite because he thought and spoke in the style of his age.

The manners and cast of thought of one age pass usually by gradual and imperceptible degrees into that of the next; but the change from the Protectorate to the Restoration era, was like the withdrawing of the drop-scene that intervenes, on the stage, between a tragedy and a farce. Religion had been professed as the guiding principle of the Protectorate, and therefore profligacy became the religion of its successor. Such contemporary authorities as the "Grammont Memoirs" reveal a universally prevalent vice at the court of Charles II., the loathsomeness of which is happily inconceivable to a virtuous mind. It

was in this new atmosphere, and under such opposite influences, that the evidence was summed up by which Cromwell's character has been judged, and at a period when his own noble dust had been torn from its grave, and dragged with ignominy to Tyburn; when his friends and admirers had perished on the scaffold, or were driven into banishment; and when, to have blasphemed the Divine name, and to have set at nought every law of our holy religion, would have been less dangerous than to have appeared as the advocate of Cromwell. Meanwhile slander and lies were accumulating under a censorship of the press that threatened to suppress Milton's "Paradise Lost," as a work obnoxious to the charge of treason; and when at length the time came that justice might have been anticipated, falsehood had done its work, and they who could have given it the lie were in their graves. But Cromwell's works have followed him. Other ages were to reap what he had sown; and if we are not worthy to repeal the judgment of the past, posterity, which shall reap a nobler harvest, will be worthier to accomplish it.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY THOMAS NELSON.